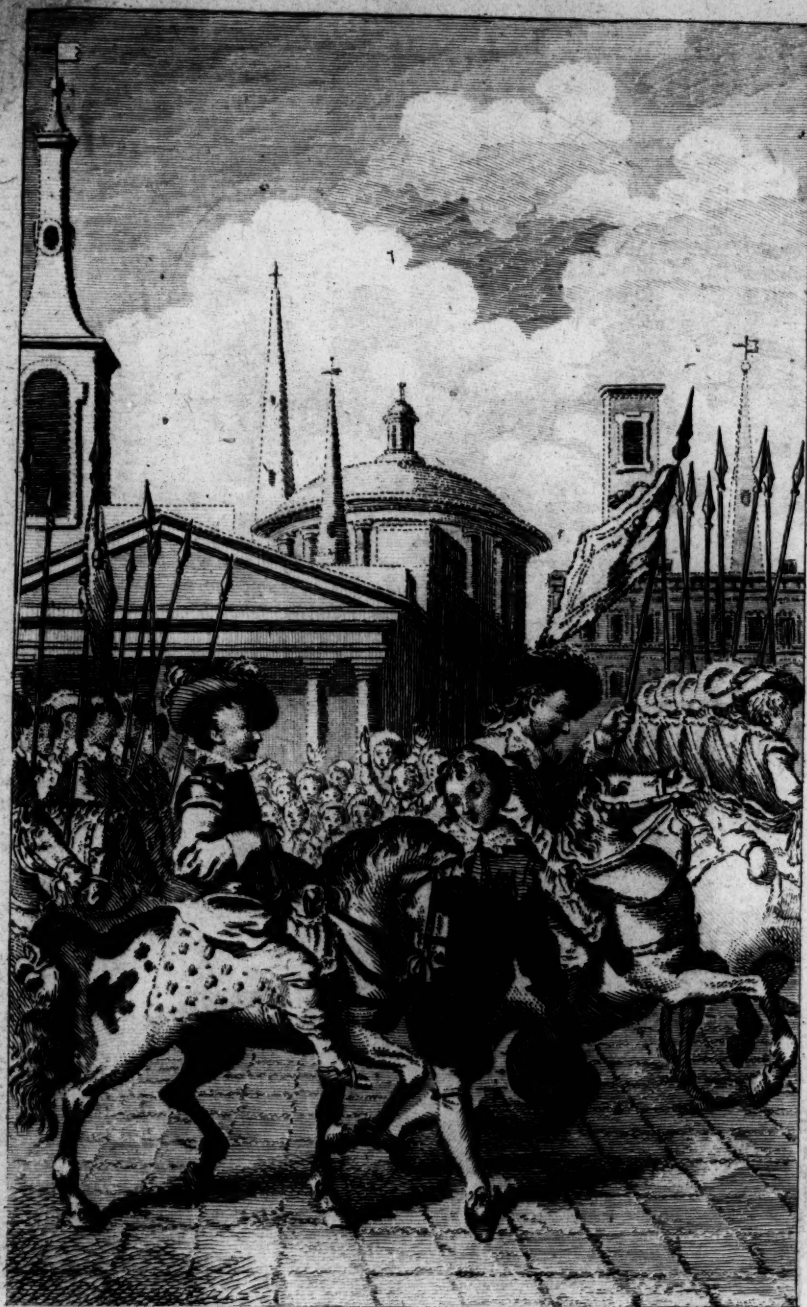




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THE
WORKS
OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Translated from the FRENCH.

WITH
NOTES, HISTORICAL, CRITICAL,
AND EXPLANATORY.

By T. FRANCKLIN, D.D.
Chaplain to his Majesty, and late Greek Professor in
the University of Cambridge.

T. SMOLLETT, M.D.
AND OTHERS.

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THE
HENRIADE

OF

Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

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THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the FIRST.



B

THE ARGUMENT.

Henry III. joined by Henry de Bourbon, king of Navarre, against the League, having blockaded Paris, sends over Henry de Bourbon privately into England, in hopes of obtaining succours from queen Elizabeth. A tempest over-taking him in his voyage, he casts anchor near an island, where an old hermit receives him, and foretells his change of religion, and accession to the throne. A description of England, and its government.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the FIRST.

THE virtuous chief who reign'd in France
I sing,
By right of conquest, and of birth, a king;
In various sufferings resolute, and brave,
Faction he quell'd: he conquer'd, and forgave,
Destroy'd the League repugnant to his reign, 5
Subdued Mayenne, and curb'd the pride of Spain.

[The virtuous chief] Henry IV. of France, son of Anthony king of Navarre, who descended in a direct line from Robert Count de Clermont, youngest son of Lewis IX. or St. Lewis, king of France. The posterity of his eldest son *Philip the Bold*, failing in Henry III. king of France, three hundred years after the death of St. Lewis, Henry of Bourbon became heir to the crown, as descended from the above-mentioned Count de Clermont, who married Beatrice, daughter of Agnes de Bourbon, heir of Archemband, lord of Bourbon in the middle of the XIIIth century.

5 Charles duke de Mayenne, brother of Henry duke de Guise, who formed the League, a faction in France; under pretence of danger of the church, he made head against Henry III. king of France, and, after his death, against Henry of Bourbon, who gained great advantages over the Spaniards in confederacy with the League.

He taught those realms he conquered to obey,
And made his subjects happy by his sway.

O heaven-born Truth, descend, celestial muse,
Thy power, thy brightness in my verse infuse. 10
May kings attentive hear thy voice divine,
To teach the monarchs of mankind is thine :
'Tis thine to war-enkindling realms to show
What dire effects from curst divisions flow.

Relate the troubles of preceding times ; 15
The peoples sufferings, and the prince's crimes.
And O ! if Fable may her succours lend,
And with thy voice her softer accents blend ;
If on thy light her shades sweet graces shed,
If her fair hand e'er deck'd thy sacred head, 20
Let her with me through all thy limits rove,
Not to conceal thy beauties but improve.

Valois then govern'd the distracted land,
Loose flow'd the reins of empire in his hand :
Rights were confounded, laws neglected bore 25
No force, alas ! for Valois reign'd no more.
No more the prince for deeds of war renown'd,
Whom as her son triumphant Conquest own'd ;

23 *Valois then governed,*] Henry III. king of France, one of the principal heroes of this poem, is always called Valois, the name of the royal branch to which he belonged.

27 *For deeds of war renowned,*] Henry III. while duke of Anjou, commanded the armies of his brother Charles IX.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 5

Whose arms through Europe spread disordered fear,
 Whose loyal subjects shed the pious tear, 30
 When the bleak North proclaimed him truly great,
 And laid her crowns, and scepters at his feet.
 Those rays of glory, erst in battle won,
 Sunk into night, and banished from the throne.
 There sat the monarch on the lap of ease, 35
 Reclining fondly in the arms of peace ;
 Too weak to bear in each lethargic hour,
 The regal diadem, and weight of power.
 Voluptuous youths usurp'd the sole command,
 And reign'd, in truth, the sovereigns of the land ; 40
 Pleased in their soft luxurious prince to find
 Corrupted morals, and a female mind.
 Meantime the Guises rose at Fortune's call ;
 And built their schemes of greatness on his fall :
 Thence the dire League, which prov'd the fatal
 source 45
 Of numerous ills, and baffled all his force.
 The servile crowd, with vain chimeras fed,
 Too blindly follow'd where the tyrants led.

against the Protestants, and at eighteen years of age had gained the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour.

39 *Voluptuous youths, &c.*] These were the minions of Henry III. with whom he abandoned himself to all kind of debauchery mixed with superstition.

6 THE HENRIADE. Canto I.

Now from the Louvre see the monarch fly,
 No faithful friend, no kind protection nigh; 50
 All had been lost, but warlike Bourbon came,
 Whose generous soul was fraught with virtue's
 flame.

'Twas his the royal sacrifice to save,
 And teach once more the monarch to be brave.
 The kings to Paris with their troops advance, 55
 The eyes of Europe all are fixed on France.
 Rome takes th' alarm, her fears the Spaniards
 share,

And wait with dread the issue of the war.

High on the walls inhuman Discord stood,
 Eager for slaughter, and a-thirst for blood; 60
 Fell Discord Mayenne and the Leaguers fir'd,
 Filled with her venom, with her rage inspir'd;
 Through church and state the deadly poison spread,
 And call'd the proud Iberia to her aid.
 This savage monster scenes of horror loves, 65
 And plagues the votaries whom her soul approves.
 She racks, and galls the slaves her chains confin'd,
 And riots in the torments of mankind.

51 *Bourbon*] Henry IV. is called indifferently throughout the poem either Bourbon, or Henry. He was born at Pau, in Bearn, the 13th of December, 1553.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 7

Westward of Paris, near the flowery meads,
 Where Seine thro' winding banks her current leads,
 Where oft the Graces, and the Muses play, 71
 The troops of Valois shone in dread array.
 There, whom religion sway'd by different laws,
 Revenge united in their sovereign's cause.
 A thousand chiefs flood forth at Bourbon's word,
 Love join'd their hearts, and valour drew the sword;
 With joy they follow'd the bright paths of fame, 75
 But one their leader, and their church the same.

Immortal Lewis eyed him from above
 With all the fondness of parental love: 80
 Virtues he saw which Gallia's king might grace,
 And future glories worthy of his race.
 Charm'd with his courage, yet he grieved to find
 Such weak discernment in so brave a mind:
 Would gladly guide him to the throne of Truth, 85
 And wish'd to check the errors of his youth.
 But valiant Henry gain'd the regal crown,
 And rose by measures to himself unknown.
 Lewis was present from his blest abode
 To lead the youthful hero on his road.

79 *Immortal Lewis*] St. Lewis, the ninth of that name, king of France, from whom the Bourbon branch was descended.

8 THE HENRIADE. Canto I.

Full oft unseen the kind assistance came,
That toils and dangers might augment his fame.

Oft had our walls beheld with martial rage
In doubtful war th' embattled ranks engage.
The plains were desolate, and Carnage spread 95
From shore to shore her mountains of the dead,
When Valois thus address'd the chief with sighs,
The tears of sorrow streaming from his eyes.

' See to what height thy monarch's ills are grown,
' There read the faithful portrait of thy own. 100
' With equal hate the factious Leaguers join
' To strike at Bourbon's glory, and at mine.
' Seditious Paris, with a proud disdain,
' Rejects the present, and the future reign.
' The ties of blood, the laws, each generous care 105
' That fills thy soul, proclaims thee lawful heir.
' Great are thy virtues, and, I blush to own,
' For this would Paris drive thee from the throne.
' More fatal still, religious Rage has shed
' Her direst curse on thy devoted head : 110

109 *Religious Rage*] Henry IV. king of Navarre had been solemnly excommunicated by Pope Sixtus in the year 1583, three years before the event here mentioned. The Pope in his Bull called him *a detestable bastard of the generation of the house of Bourbon*; deprived him, and all the house of Condé for ever, of all their dominions and fiefs, and above all declared them incapable of inheriting the crown. Though the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé were in arms at the head of the pro-

' Rome

- ' Rome without armies distant nations awes,
 ' Spain hurls her thunder, and asserts her cause.
 ' Friends, subjects, kindred, in this evil day,
 ' Or basely fly, or proudly disobey.
 ' Rich is the harvest of Iberia's gains, 115
 ' Who pours her legions on my desert plains.
 ' Perchance, the succours of a foreign force
 ' May stop th' impending danger in its course.
 ' Britannia's Queen may lend the friendly aid,
 ' And mutual fears our enemies invade. 120
 ' What, though eternal jealousy, and pride
 ' Oppose our interest, and our hearts divide.
 ' When life's severest ills have been endur'd,
 ' My glory blasted, and my fame obscur'd;
 ' When vile affronts have made my honour poor,
 ' My subjects, and my country are no more. 125
 ' Who comes these proud insulters to controul
 ' Is most my friend, and dearest to my soul:
 ' No common, listless agent will I trust,
 ' Be thou my envoy in a cause so just; 130

testants, the parliament, always attentive to preserve the honour and liberty of the state, made the strongest remonstrances against this Bull, and Henry IV. caused to be fixed up at Rome, on the door of the Vatican, that Sixtus V. who called himself Pope, had lied, and that it was he himself who was an heretic, &c.

‘ On thee my fortune in the war depends,
 ‘ Thy merit only can procure me friends.’

Thus Valois spoke; and Bourbon heard with grief
 The new designs, and counsels of the chief.
 His great and generous mind disdain’d to yield 135
 Thus to divide the glory of the field.

There was a time when conquest met his arm,
 And all those honours which the brave can charm :
 When strong in power, unaided by intrigue,
 Himself, with Condé, quell’d the trembling
 League : 140

Yet with the king’s command the chief complied,
 And laid th’ uplifted thunderbolt aside :
 The troops, amaz’d, with restless ardor burn,
 Their fate, their fortune waits on his return.
 The absent hero still preserv’d his fame, 145
 The guilty city shudder’d at his name :
 Each moment thought the mighty warrior near,
 With death, and desolation in his rear.

140 *Condé*] Henry, prince of Condé, the son of Lewis who was killed at Jarnac. He was the hopes of the Protestant party; and died at St. Jean d’Angely, aged thirty-five years, in 1685; his wife, Charlotte de la Trimouille, was accused of murdering him.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. II.

He through the plains of Neustria bends his way,
 Attended only by his friend Mornay. 150

Mornay, too good to flatter, or deceive,
 The cause of error too averse to leave.
 By zeal, and prudence studious to advance
 Alike the interest of his church and France.
 The courtier's censor, but at court belov'd, 155
 Rome's greatest foe, and yet by Rome approv'd.

Between two rocks, which hoary Ocean laves,
 And beats with all the fury of his waves,
 The port of Dieppe meets the hero's eyes,
 And crowds of eager mariners supplies. 160
 Their hands prepare the vessels for the main,
 Those sovereign rulers of the watery plain:
 Tempestuous Boreas, fast-enchain'd in air,
 Leaves the smooth sea to softer Zephyr's care. 164

150 *Mornay*] Duplessis Mornay; the bravest, and most virtuous person belonging to the Protestant party. He was perfect master of the Greek and Latin, and well skilled in Hebrew; which at that time rendered him a prodigy. He served his religion and his master with his pen and his sword. It was he whom Henry IV. king of Navarre sent to Elizabeth Queen of England with no other instructions than a blank paper signed; and he succeeded in almost all his negotiations, because he was a true politician, incapable of the little arts of intrigue. His letters were written with great sagacity and strength of argument. When Henry IV. changed his religion, Mornay reproached him in the severest manner, and retired from court. He was called the pope of the Huguenots.

12 THE HENRIADE. Canto I.

Their anchor weighed, they swiftly quit the strand,
And soon descry Britannia's happy land.

When lo! the day's bright star is hid in clouds,
And gathering whirlwinds whistle thro' the shrouds.
Heaven gives her thunder, waves on waves arise,
And floods of lightning burst from all the skies: 170
Death mounts the storm, and foaming billows show
The king of terrors to the train below.

Nor death, nor dangers Bourbon's soul annoy,
His country's sorrows all his cares employ;
For her he casts the longing look behind, 175
The storm accuses, and condemns the wind.

Less generous warmth the Roman's breast inspir'd,
By love of conquest, and ambition fir'd,
When, launching boldly from Epirus' coast,
By angry seas, and furious surges tost, 180
He dar'd his single fortune to oppose
To all the power of Neptune, and his foes;

179 *Epirus' coast*] Julius Cæsar being at Epirus in the city of Apollonia, now called Ceres, retired secretly, and embarked on the little river Anius. He in the night entered a bark of twelve oars to go in person in search of his troops that were in the kingdom of Naples. He suffered a violent tempest. See Plutarch.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 13

Firm, and convinced that no impending doom
Could snatch its monarch from the world, and
Rome.

'Twas then that being, infinitely wise, 185
At whose high will all empires fall, or rise,
Who gave this world its fair, and beauteous form,
Who calms the ocean, and directs the storm,
On Gallia's hero look'd with pity down
From the bright radiance of his saphire throne.
The waves, obedient to his dread command, 190
Convey'd the vessel to the neighbouring land :
Guided by heaven, secure the hero stood
Where Jersey's isle emerges from the flood.

Near to the shore there lay a calm retreat, 195
By shades defended from the solar heat :
A rock that hid the fury of the seas,
Forbid the entrance of each ruder breeze :
By nature's hand adorn'd, a mossy grot
Improv'd the beauties of this rural spot. 200
An holy hermit, train'd in wisdom's ways,
There spent the tranquil evening of his days ;
Lost to the world, and all its trifling show,
His only study was himself to know.

O'er

O'er every fault his pensive mind would rove, 205
Which pleasure dictates, or which springs from
love :

The flowery meadows, and the silver streams
Had rais'd his soul to more enlightened themes.
Each passion quell'd in this retir'd abode,
His ardent wish was union with his God. 210

Wisdom before him spread her ample page,
And heaven protect'd his declining age,
Illum'd with sacred truth the sage's mind,
And to his hand the book of fate consign'd.
The hoary sage, who well our hero knew, 215

Whom God inform'd with science ever true,
Near a clear stream invites the prince to taste
The homely diet of a short repast.
He oft had fled from vanity, and care,
To humble cottages, and simpler fare ; 220
Had bid adieu to courts, and courtly pride,
And laid the pomp of majesty aside.

In plain, and useful converse much was said
Of troubles through the Christian empire spread.
Mornay, unmov'd, determin'd to protect, 225
With zealous fervor, Calvin and his sect.
Henry, in doubt what precepts to believe,
Petition'd heaven one ray of light to give.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 15

• Error, he said, in all preceding times,
• Has truth conceal'd, and been the nurse of
• crimes. 230

• Must I then wander, and mistake the road,
• Whose only confidence is placed in God :
• A God, so gracious, sure will lend his aid,
• And teach mankind what worship should be
• paid."

• Let us, replied the venerable seer, 235
• God's secret counsels, and designs revere ;
• Nor rashly think that human errors bring
• Their muddy currents from so pure a spring.
• Well I remember, when these aged eyes
• Beheld this sect in humble weakness rise, 240
• When, as an exile dreading human sight,
• It fled for refuge to the shades of night :
• By slow degrees the phantom rais'd her head,
• And all around her baleful influence shed. 245
• Plac'd on the throne, no power her force confines,
• She reigns our tyrant, and o'erturns our shrines.
• Far from the court, I weep in secret here
• Religion's fate, with unavailing tear:
• Hope gilds my setting sun with cheering ray—
• So strange a worship shortly must decay :
• Its new-born glory in our days shall cease,
• First sprung from man, and founded in caprice.
• Frail,

- ‘ Frail, like ourselves, all human works decay;
‘ God sweeps their glory, and their pride away.
‘ Safe, and secure his holy city stands ; 255
‘ Nor dreads the malice of our mortal hands.
‘ In vain the fabric hell and time invade,
‘ His own right arm the strong foundation laid.
‘ On thee, great Bourbon, will he pour his light,
‘ And chase the mists of error from thy sight. 260
‘ On Valois’ throne, with providence thy shield,
‘ Bright wilt thou shine, and all thy foes shall yield;
‘ Thro’ paths of glory conquest leads thy sword;
‘ ’Tis heaven’s decree, the Highest gave his word.
‘ Yet hope not rashly, in the pride of youth, 265
‘ To enter Paris, uninform’d by truth.
‘ But most of love’s bewitching draught beware ;
‘ The bravest hearts are conquer’d by the fair.
‘ From that sweet poison guard thy manly soul ;
‘ Tho’ passion calls, and pleasure crowns the bowl.
‘ And when, at length, this sage advice pursued,
‘ The factious Leaguers, and thyself subdued ;
‘ When in a dreadful siege, and bloody strife,
‘ A dying nation thou recal’st to life;
‘ Then all thy realms shall taste the sweets of peace,
‘ All strife shall vanish, and all discord cease. 275

Then

' Then raise thine eyes to that almighty Lord
 ' Whom erst our fathers honour'd, and ador'd :
 ' Who most preserves his image, most shall find
 ' That virtue pleases, and that heaven is kind.' 280

The sage's words the hero's soul inspir'd,
 Fill'd with new transports, with new ardour fir'd :
 Those happy days were present to his eyes,
 When God to man descended from the skies ;
 When virtue open'd all her sacred springs, 285
 Pronounc'd her oracles, and govern'd kings :
 With tears he claspt the hermit to his breast,
 And parting sighs his honest grief exprest.
 Far distant scenes creative Fancy drew,
 And rising glories dawn'd upon his view. 290
 Marks of surprize were stamp'd on Mornay's face,
 But heaven from him with-held her gifts of grace.
 In vain on earth the chief was counted wise,
 Just was his soul, but error dimm'd his eyes.

While thus the sage, enlighten'd from above, 295
 Spoke to the heart, and tried the prince to move ;
 Charm'd with his voice the listening winds subside,
 Phœbus breaks forth, and Ocean smooths the tide.
 By him conducted, Bourbon reach'd the shore,
 And prosperous gales the chief to Albion bore. 300
 Soon

Soon as he saw the sea-encircled isle,
 Its change of fortune made the hero smile.
 Where once the public evils owed their cause
 To long abuses of the wisest laws,
 Where many a warrior fell of high renown, 305
 And kings descended from the tottering throne,
 A virgin queen the regal sceptre sway'd,
 And fate itself her sovereign power obey'd;
 The wise Eliza, whose directing hand
 Had the great scale of Europe at command; 310
 And rul'd a people that alike disdain
 Or freedom's ease, or slavery's iron chain.
 Of every woe her reign oblivion breeds,
 There flocks unnumber'd graze the flowery meads:
 Britannia's vessels rule the azure seas, 315
 Corn fills her plains, and fruitage loads her trees.
 From pole to pole her gallant navies sweep
 The waters of the tributary deep.
 On Thames's banks each flower of genius thrives,
 There sports the Muse, and Mars his thunder gives.
 Three different powers at Westminster appear, 320
 And all admire the ties which join them there.
 Whom interest parts, the laws together bring,

320 *At Westminster*] There the parliament of England assembles: it is necessary to have the concurrence of the house of commons, lords, and the consent of the king, to make laws.

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 19

The people's deputies, the peers, and king.
One whole they form, whose terror wide extends
To neighb'ring nations, and their rights defends.
Thrice happy when the people blefs the sway 326
Of sovereign power, and willingly obey !
But happier still, when freedom's blessings spring
From the wise conduct of a prudent king. 330
• O when, cried Bourbon, ravish'd at the sight,
• In France shall peace and glory thus unite ?
• A female hand has clos'd the gates of war,
• Look on, ye monarchs, and adopt her care :
• Your nations discord's horrid tide o'erwhelms,
• She lives the blessing of adoring realms.'

Now at that spacious city he arrives,
Where, nurs'd by heav'n-born freedom plenty
lives.

Now, mighty William's tower before him stood,
Now, fair Eliza's more august abode. 340

Thither he speeds, attended by Mornay,
His friend, and sole associate in the way.
True heroes scorn that pageantry and state,
Whose glittering honours captivate the great.

339 *William's tower*] The Tower of London is an ancient castle built near the Thames by William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy.

For France he supplicates with humble prayers,
 And native dignity each accent bears. 345
 From honest frankness all his periods flow,
 The only eloquence that soldiers know.

‘ Does Valois send you to the banks of Thame ?
 ‘ Eliza cries, surpriz’d at Valois’ name :
 ‘ Are all your dire contentions at an end !
 ‘ And you, that bitterest enemy, his friend.
 ‘ Fame spread your discords, and that fame was true,
 ‘ From north to south, from Ganges to Peru : 355
 ‘ And does that arm, so dreaded in the fight,
 ‘ Protect his honor, and maintain his right ?’

‘ Distress, replied the chief, our friendship gave,
 ‘ The chains are broke, and Valois will be brave.
 ‘ Far happier days he once was doom’d to see, 366
 ‘ Had all his confidence been placed in me :
 ‘ But fears unmanly in his breast arose ;
 ‘ ’Twas art, and cowardice that made us foes.
 ‘ Henceforth, the vanquish’d shall my aid receive,
 ‘ His wrongs I punish, and his faults forgive. 365
 ‘ This war so just may raise Britannia’s fame,
 ‘ ’Tis thine, great queen, to signalize her name.
 ‘ Let royal mercy spread her downy wings,
 ‘ And crown thy virtues by defending kings.’

Canto I. THE HENRIADE. 21

- The queen, impatient, asks him to relate 370
What ruthless evils harrassed Gallia's state.
What springs of action had produc'd a change
At once so new, so wonderful, and strange.
' Full oft of bloody broils, Eliza said,
' Thro' Britain's isle has fame the rumour spread :
' But who for certainty on fame depends, 375
' Which light with darkness, truth with falsehood
blends ?'
' From you, or Valois' friend, or conquering foe,
' Those long dissensions I could wish to know.
' Yourself was witness, and can best impart 380
' What mystic ties have chang'd so brave a heart :
' Display your martial deeds, your griefs declare,
' No life more worthy of a royal ear.'
' And must I then, return'd the chief with
sighs,
' Recall those scenes of horror to my eyes ! 385
' O would to heav'n, oblivion's endless night
' With thickest shades, might veil them from my
fight !
' Must Bourbon tell of kindred prince's crimes,
' And the fell madness of preceding times ?
' I shudder at the thought ; but your com-
mand, 390
' Respect of power forbids me to withstand.
' Others,

- * Others, no doubt, would use refin'd address,
- * Disguise the truth, and make their errors less :
- * But I reject an artifice so weak,
- * And like a soldier, not an envoy speak.' 395

I,

95



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the SECOND.



THE ARGUMENT.

Henry the great relates to queen Elizabeth the history of the civil wars of France. He traces them from their origin, and enters into a detail of the massacre committed on St. Bartholomew's day.

T H E
H E N R I A D E.

C A N T O the S E C O N D.

U Nspeakable, O Queen, in Gallia's woe,
From bigot rage her dire disasters flow ;
Religion, raging with inhuman zeal,
Arms every hand, and points the fatal steel.
Yet to my province it will least belong 5
To prove the Romans, or Geneva wrong.
Whatever names divine the parties claim,
In mad imposture they are both the same.
If in the strifes, which Europe's sons divide,
Murder and treason mark the erring side; 10
Since both alike in blood their hands imbrue,
Their crimes are equal, and their blindness too :

6. Several Historians have described Henry IV. as wavering between the two religions ; here he is described as he was, a man of honour, seriously endeavouring to inform himself, the friend of truth, the enemy of persecution, and detesting guilt wheresoever it appeared.

C

For

For me, whose business is to guard the state,
 I leave to heaven their vengeance, and their fate.
 My hand ne'er trespass'd on the rights divine; 15
 Nor e'er profan'd the incense of the shrine.
 Perish each statesman cruel, and unkind,
 Who reigns despotic o'er the human mind;
 Who stains with blood religion's sacred word,
 And kills, or gains new converts by his sword. 20
 Pretending that the Great All-wise, All-good
 Approves the sacrifice of human blood.
 Oh would that God, whose laws I wish to know,
 On Valois' court such sentiments bestow!
 The Guises falsely plead religion's cause, 25
 No scruple checks them, and no conscience awes.

25. Francis duke of Guise, commonly at that time called the Great duke of Guise, was the father of Balafre. It was he, who with the cardinal his brother, laid the foundations of the league. He had great qualities, which however we must take care not to dignify with the name of virtues.

That great historian the President de Thou relates, that Francis de Guise resolved to cause Anthony of Navarre, the father of Henry IV. to be assassinated in the chamber of Francis II. He had prevailed on that young king to permit this murder. Anthony of Navarre was brave, though of a wavering disposition. He was informed of the plot, and did not fail to enter the chamber where he was to have been assassinated. If they kill me, said he to Reinsy his gentleman, take my bloody shirt, carry it to my son and my wife, and they will read in my blood, what they ought to do to revenge me. Francis II. did not dare to stain himself with the guilt of this odious crime, upon which the duke of Guise, on leaving his chamber, cried, *What a poor king we have!*

At

At me those leaders, insolent and proud,
 Direct their fury, and ensnare the crowd.
 These eyes have seen our citizens engage
 In mutual murders, with a zealous rage: 30
 For vain disputes have seen their pious care
 Deal all around the horrid flames of war.
 You know the madness of those vulgar minds
 Which faction warms, and superstition blinds;
 When proudly arming in a cause divine, 35
 No power their head-strong passion can confine.
 Erst in these happy realms yourself beheld
 The rising evil, and its danger quell'd:
 The troubled scene assum'd a milder form;
 Your virtuous cares subdued the gathering storm.
 No reign more pleasing could I wish to see, 40
 Your laws are flourishing, your city free.
 Far other paths did Medicis pursue,
 Far less belov'd, less merciful than you.
 Mov'd by these tales of misery, and woe, 45
 More of her conduct should you seek to know,
 Myself her real character will tell,
 Nor ought exaggerate, nor ought conceal.

41 *No reign more pleasing*] M. de Castelneau, envoy of France to Queen Elizabeth, speaks thus of her: This princess had all the great qualities required for reigning happily. We may say of her reign, what happened in the time of Augustus, *That the temple of Janus was shut, &c.*

Many have tried, but few could e'er impart
 The secret counsels of so deep a heart : 50
 I with her sons have past my early age,
 And been a wretched witness of her rage.

The king expiring in the bloom of life
 Left a free course to his ambitious wife.
 Form'd by her cares to empire, either son 55
 Alike she hated when he reign'd alone.
 Her hands, the source from whence confusion flow'd,
 The seeds of jealousy and discord sow'd.
 Her deep designs, no wild effect of chance,
 To Condé Guise oppos'd, and France to France :
 By turns defending enemies, and friends, 61
 And rivals aiding for her private ends.
 False to her sect, and superstition's slave,
 She fought each pleasure which ambition gave.

55 Catharine of Medicis quarrelled with her son Charles IX. towards the latter end of his life, and afterwards with Henry III. She had so openly expressed her dislike of the government of Francis II. that she was suspected, though unjustly, of having having hastened the death of that king.

60 In the memoirs of the League is contained a letter from Catherine of Medicis to the prince of Condé, in which she returns him her thanks for having taken arms against the court.

63 When she believed that the battle of Dreux was lost, and the protestants had gained the victory, " Well then, she cried, " we shall say our prayers in French."

She was so weak as to believe in Magick, witness the Talismans which were found upon her after her death.

Scarce

Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 29

Scarce did one virtuous grace adorn her mind, 65
Deform'd with all the vices of her kind.

Forgive the freedom of an honest heart ;

You reign a stranger to your sex's art ;

The fair resembling in her charms alone,

Elizabeth was born to fill the throne, 70

To win affection, or to guard a state,

The brightest pattern to the good and great.

Princes from you may learn the way to fame ;

Europe with heroes has enroll'd your name.

The second Francis, in youth's early pride, 75

By fate untimely join'd his fire, and died :

Guise he ador'd, no more his years had shown,

Nor vice, nor virtue mark'd him for their own.

Charles, younger still, the regal name obtain'd,

But fear evinc'd, 'twas Medicis that reign'd : 80

She fought by artful policy to bring

Eternal childhood on the rising king.

A hundred battles spoke her new command,

And discord's flames were kindled by her hand :

Two rival parties she with rage inspir'd, 85

Their arms directed, and their bosoms fir'd.

At Dreux their hostile banners were display'd,
 Dreux first the theatre of war was made.
 Old Montmorenci near the royal tomb
 Met from a warrior's arm a warrior's doom. 90
 At Orleans Guise resign'd his latest breath,
 A stern assassin gave the stroke of death.
 My father still unwilling slave at court,
 Was fortune's bubble, and the queen's support;
 Wrought his own fate, in battle firmly stood, 95
 And died for those who thirsted for his blood.

87 The battle of Dreux was the first pitched battle between the catholic and Protestant parties. It happened in 1562.

89 Anne de Montmorenci, a man remarkable for his obstinacy, and the most unfortunate general of his time, was taken prisoner at Pavia and at Dreux, beaten at St. Quentin by Philip II. and was at length mortally wounded at the battle of St. Denis by an Englishman named Stuart, the same person who had taken him prisoner at Dreux.

91 This is the same Francis de Guise who is mentioned afterwards, famous for the defence of Metz against Charles V. He was besieging the Protestants in Orleans in 1563, when Poltrot-de-meré shot him in the back with a pistol loaded with three poisoned balls. He was forty-four years old when he died.

93 Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, the father of Henry IV. was of a weak and unsettled temper. He quitted the Protestant religion in which he was born, just when his wife renounced the Catholic. He never knew with certainty what party or what religion he belonged to. He was killed at the siege of Boner, where he assisted the Guises, who were his oppressors, against the Protestants whom he loved. He died in 1562, of the same age with Francis de Guise.

Condé

Condé vouchsaf'd a parent's aid to lend,
 My surest guardian, and my truest friend.
 Nurs'd in his camp, beneath the laurel's shade,
 With infant chiefs my hand the falchion sway'd :
 Like him disdaining indolence, and sloth, 101
 Arms were the toys, and play-things of my youth.
 O plains of Jarnac ! O unhappy day
 That took my guardian, and my friend away !
 Condé, whose kind protection I enjoy'd, 105
 Thy murdering hand, O Montesquiou, destroy'd :
 Too weak, too feeble to revenge the blow,
 I saw thee deal destruction on the foe.
 Young and untaught, expos'd to every ill,
 Heaven found some hero to protect me still ; 110
 Great Condé first my steps to glory train'd,
 Next my good cause Coligny's arm sustain'd :

97. The prince of Condé who is here meant, was brother of the king of Navarre, and uncle of Henry IV. He was a long time chief of the Protestants, and a great enemy of the Guises. He was slain after the battle of Jarnac by Montesquiou, captain of the guard to the Duke of Anjou, (afterwards Henry III.) The Count of Soissons son of the deceased, sought diligently after Montesquiou and his relations, that he might sacrifice them to his vengeance.

Henry IV. was at the battle of Jarnac, though he was not fourteen years of age, and even observed the faults that occasioned its loss.

112 Gaspard de Coligny, admiral of France, the son of Gaspard de Coligny, marshal of France, and Louisa de Montmorency, sister of the constable, born at Châtillon Feb. 16, 1516. Vid. the following remarks.

Coligny, gracious queen ! if Europe see
 A virtue worthy her regard in me,
 If Rome herself confess my youthful days 115
 Not unrenown'd, Coligny's be the praise.
 Early I learn'd beneath his eye to bear
 A soldier's hardships in the school of war ;
 His great example my ambition fir'd,
 His counsel form'd me, and his deeds inspir'd. 120
 I saw him gray in arms, yet undismay'd,
 The general cause reclining on his aid ;
 Dear to his friends, respected by the foe,
 Firm in all states, majestic though in woe ;
 Expert alike in battle and retreat, 125
 More glorious, ev'n more awful in defeat,
 Than Gaston or Dunois in all the pride
 Of war, with France and fortune at their side.

Ten years elaps'd of battles lost and won,
 Still on the field our well-arm'd legions shone ; 130
 With grief the queen her barren trophies view'd,
 Our hardy troops, tho' vanquish'd, unsubdued,
 And in her breast a mighty purpose plann'd,
 To sweep the civil fury from the land.
 Sudden new counsels in her court prevail'd, 135
 And peace was offer'd, when the sword had fail'd.
 A fatal peace my hapless friends obtain'd,
 Its olive with the blood of thousands stain'd :

Gods !

I.
Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 33

Gods ! is it then so hard a task to stray, 139

And shall their monarchs teach mankind the way?

True to his sovereign still, devoutly true,

Though he oppos'd her, to his country too,

Coligny seiz'd the happy hour to heal

Her bleeding interests, with a patriot's zeal.

Undaunted thro' surrounding foes he press'd, 145

(Suspicious seldom haunt a hero's breast)

Nor staid till in her own august abode,

Full in the midst before the queen we stood.

With circling arms and flowing tears she strove

To lavish o'er me ev'n a mother's love ; 150

Coligny's friendship was her dearest choice,

Still to be rul'd by his unerring voice ;

Wealth, power, and honour at his feet she lay'd,

Her son's indulgence to our hopes display'd,

Us'd fraudulent art to gain her wicked ends, 155

Deluding basely my too sanguine friends.

All were not blinded by this specious show

Of cordial grace and bounty from the foe.

But Charles, still anxious to insure success,

More bounteous seem'd, as they believ'd him less :

Train'd up in falshood from his earliest youth, 161

He held eternal enmity with truth ;

From infant years had treasur'd in his heart

The poisonous precepts of his mother's art ;

Too soon he learn'd her sanguinary lore, 165
 Too soon he stain'd his cruel hands in gore.
 More deeply still to veil the dark design,
 By nuptial bands he made his sister mine.
 O bands accurst, and Hymen's rights profan'd,
 By heaven in anger for our curse ordain'd, 170
 Whose baleful torch, dire omen of our doom,
 Blaz'd but to lead me to a mother's tomb.
 Though I have suffer'd let me still be just,
 Nore blame thee, Medicis, but where I must;
 Suspicious, though on reason firmly built, 175
 I scorn, nor need them to enhance thy guilt.
 But Albret died—forgive these tears I shed,
 Due to the fond remembrance of the dead.
 Mean while the dreadful hour in swift career, 179
 Big with the queen's vindictive wrath, drew near.

168 Margaret of Valois, sister of Charles IX. was married to Henry IV. in 1572, few days before the massacre.

171 Jeane d'Albret, mother of Henry IV. who was drawn to Paris with the rest of the Huguenots, died almost suddenly between the marriage of her son and the feast of St. Bartholomew; but Caillart her physician, and Desnoeuds her surgeon, both zealous Protestants, who opened her body, found no marks of poison upon it.

180 It was on the night between the 23d and 24th of August, being the feast of St. Bartholomew, in 1572, where this bloody tragedy was executed.

The admiral was lodged in the street of Berizy, in a house that is now an inn, called the Hotel St. Peter, where his chamber is still shown.

Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 35

Night's gloomy mantle veil'd the face of heaven,
 Silent and still th' appointed sign was given:
 The moon, pale regent, falter'd on her way,
 And sickening seem'd to quench her feeble ray.
 Coligny slept, and largely o'er his head 185
 The drowsy power had all his influence shed.
 Sudden unnumber'd shrieks dispell'd the charm,
 His rallying senses felt the dread alarm;
 He wak'd, look'd forth, and saw th' assassin throng
 With murderous strides march hastily along; 190
 Saw on their arms the quivering torch-light play,
 His palace fir'd, a nation in dismay,
 His bleeding household stifled in the flames,
 While all the savage host around exclaims, 194
 "Let no compassion check your righteous hands,
 "For God, and Medicis, and Charles commands."
 Now his own name shrill echoing rends the skies,
 And now far off Teligny he descries,
 The young Teligny, virtuous and brave, 199
 To whose chaste love the fire his daughter gave,

198 The count Teligny, ten months before, had married the daughter of the admiral. He had so much sweetness in his countenance, that they who came first to kill him relented at the sight, but others more barbarous did the business.

Hope of his party, honour of his name,
 Still foremost in the glorious field of fame.
 The bleeding youth by ruffian force convey'd,
 With outstretch'd arms demands his instant aid.
 Helpless, unarm'd, he saw his fate decreed, 205
 Doom'd by the vile assassin's sword to bleed;
 Yet bravely anxious for renown atchiev'd,
 Wish'd but to die the hero he had liv'd.

Already the tumultuous band explore
 His own recess, and thunder at the door. 210
 Instant he flings it wide, and meets the foe
 With eye untroubled, and majestic brow,
 Such as in battle with deliberate breast,
 Serene, he urg'd the slaughter, or repress'd.

Awful and sage he stood, his gracious form 215
 Quell'd the loud tumult, and controul'd the storm
 "Finish, my friends, your fatal task, he said,
 "Bathe in my freezing blood this hoary head!
 "Strike, and strike deep; be satisfied and know
 "With my last breath I can forgive the blow; 220
 "The mean desire of life my soul abjures,
 "Yet happier might I die defending yours."

The savage band grown human at his words,
 Clasping his knees let fall their idle swords;

Prone

Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 37

Prone on the ground his pard'ning grace implore,
And at his feet repentant sorrows pour ; 226
Amidst assassins, thus the hero shone ;
Monarchs are less respected on the throne.

When Besme, impatient for his destin'd prey,
Rush'd headlong in, enrag'd at their delay ; 230
Furious he saw the deed unfinish'd yet,
And each assassin trembling at his feet.
No change in him this scene of sorrow wrought,
Hard and unfeeling still, the caitiff thought,
Whoe'er relented at Coligny's fate, 235
Was the queen's foe, and rebel to the state.
Athwart the croud he breaks impetuous way,
Firm stands the chief, unconscious of dismay ;
With look averted the barbarian gor'd
The hero's side with unrelenting sword, 240
Left at a glance that eye's resistless charm
Should freeze his purpose, or unnerve his arm.
Such was the brave Coligny's mournful end ;
Insult and outrage ev'n his death attend,

229 Besme was a German, a domestic of the house of Guise. This wretch being afterwards taken by the Protestants, the Rochellers offered a price for him that they might tear him to pieces in the great square, but he was killed by a person named Bretanville.

38 THE HENRIADE. Canto II.

His corpse unburied and defil'd with gore, 245
 Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.
 At the queen's feet his sacred head is thrown,
 A conquest worthy both herself and son.
 With brow unalter'd and serene she fate,
 Nor seem'd t'enjoy the victim of her hate; 250
 To veil her secret thoughts so well she knew,
 Such presents seem'd familiar to her view.

Vain were the task and endless to recite
 Each horrid scene of that distressful night;
 Coligny's death serv'd only to presage 255
 Our future woes, an earnest of their rage.
 Legions of bigots, flush'd with fiery zeal
 And frantic ardour, grasp the murdering steel;
 Proudly they march where heaps of slaughter rise,
 Unsated vengeance sparkling in their eyes. 260
 Guise in the van full many a victim paid
 Indignant to his father's injured shade;

244 They suspended the admiral by the feet with an iron chain to the gibbet of Montfaucon. — Charles IX. went, together with his court, to enjoy this horrid spectacle. One of his courtiers saying that the body of Coligny had an ill smell, the king answered like Vitellius, the body of an enemy slain smells always well.

261 This was Henry duke of Guise, surnamed Balafre, who was slain at Blois: the brother of duke Francis, who was assassinated by Poltrot.

Their leaders animate the troops aloud,
 And chase to madness the deluded crowd ;
 Long registers of deaths foredoom'd display, 265
 And guide the poignard to it's destin'd prey.

The tumult I omit, the deafening screams,
 The blood that floated in promiscuous streams ;
 How on his father's coarse struck rudely down,
 Convulsed with anguish fell th'expiring son ; 270
 How when the flames had split the mouldering wall,
 It crush'd the cradled infant in its fall :

Events like these we view with less surprize,
 They mark the track where human frenzy flies.
 But stranger far what few will e'er believe 275

In future ages, or yourself conceive,
 The barbarous rout, whose hearts with added fire,
 Those holy savages, their priests inspire ;
 Ev'n from the carnage call upon the Lord,
 Displaying high in air the reeking sword ; 280
 And while their rage the ground with crimson dyes,
 To the curst offering they invoke the skies.

What num'rous heroes in that havock died !

Renel and brave Pardaillan by his side,

284. Anthony of Clermont-Renel, as he was saving himself
 in his shirt, was massacred by the son of the Baron des Adrets,
 and by his own cousin, Buffy d'Amboise. The marquis of Par-
 daillan was slain at his side.

Guerchy and wife Lavardin, worthy well 285
A longer life and gentler fortune, fell.

Among the wretches, whom that night of woe
Plunged in the gloom of endless night below,
Marillac and Soubise mark'd down to death,
Defended stoutly their devoted breath, 290
'Till mangled, breathing short, and almost dead,
The wretches to the Louvre's gate are led ;
While to their king with suppliant voice they cry,
Deaf to their prayers, he hears not, and they die.

High on the roof the royal fury stood, 295
At leisure feasting on the scenes of blood,
Her cruel minions watch the gloomy host,
And mark the spot where slaughter rages most ;

285 Guerchy defended himself a long time in the street, and slew many of the assassins 'till he was overpowered by numbers ; but the marquis of Lavardin had not time to draw his sword.

289 Marillac, Count Rochfoucault, was a favourite of Charles IX. and had spent part of the night with him. The king had some inclination to save him, and had himself commanded him to sleep in the Louvre ; but at length he let him depart, saying, I see plainly it is God's will that he should perish.

Soubise was so called because he had married the heiress of that family. His own name was Dupont-Quellence. He defended himself a long time, and fell covered with wounds under the queen's window. The ladies flocked thither to see his body, naked and bloody as it was, with a savage curiosity, worthy of that abominable court,

Brave

Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 41

Brave chiefs! triumphant only in their shame,
Saw Paris blaze, and gloried in the flame. 300

Oh scandal to the name of king rever'd!
Himself, the monarch, joins the felon herd;
Himself the trembling fugitive pursues,
And ev'n his sacred hands in blood imbrues.
This Valois too, whose cause I now support, 305
Who comes by me, a suppliant to your court,
Shar'd in his brother's guilt an impious part,
And roused the flames of vengeance in his heart;
Nor yet is Valois fierce, of savage mood,
Or prone by nature to delight in blood; 310
But on his youth those dire examples wrought,
And weakness, more than malice, was his fault.

A few there were whom vengeance sought in
vain,
Who 'scap'd unhurt among the thousands slain.
Caumont! thy fortune, thy auspicious fate, 315
Ages unborn with wonder shall relate.

301 I have heard the last marshal of Fesse assert, that in his youth he knew an old man 90 years of age, who had been page to Charles IX. and who had often told him, that he himself loaded the carabine with which the king fired upon his Protestant subjects, the night of St. Bartholomew.

315 Du Caumont, who escaped the massacre, was the famous marshal de la Force, who afterwards gained such great reputation, and lived to the age of fourscore and four years.

The

The hoary parent with his sons repos'd,
His aged eyes in needful slumber clos'd,
And as he slept the harmless boys between,
The fell destroyers mar the peaceful scene; 32
With hasty strokes their poignards plunging round
They deal a random death at every wound.
But he, whose mercies o'er our fate preside,
Can turn with ease the threatening hour aside;
Caumont escap'd thro' too much zeal to slay, 325
Unhurt beside his aged sire he lay.
A hand unseen was stretch'd in his defence,
And screen'd from harm his infant innocence;
Pierced with a thousand wounds, to all their force
His father still oppos'd his bleeding corse, 330
And a whole nation's ardour to destroy
Eluding, twice gave being to his boy.

Me to soft sleep resign'd, and balmy rest,
No fear alarm'd, no jealousy possess'd;
Deep in the Louvre, nor by arms annoy'd, 335
My soul the sweets of calm repose enjoy'd:
But oh! what scenes my waking eyes survey'd,
Grim death in all his horrid pomp array'd,
Porches and porticos were deluged o'er, 339
With crimson streams, and stood in pools of gore;

My

Canto II. THE HENRIADE. 43

My friends still bleeding, my domestics slain,
The truest, best, and dearest of my train.

Already at my bed the villains stand
Prepar'd, already lift the murdering hand ;
My life hangs wavering on a point, I wait 345
The final stroke, and yield me to my fate.

But whether reverence of their ancient lords,
The blood of Bourbon, check'd their daring swords !
Whether ingenious to torment the queen
Held Henry's life a sacrifice too mean ; 350
Or wisely spared it, to secure alone
In future storms, a shelter for her own ;
Instead of death, at once to set me free,
Chains and a dungeon were her stern decree.

Less cruel fate Coligny did betide ; 355
For all his woes were ended when he dy'd :
He fell, but fell in virtuous freedom brave,
And glory waited on him to the grave.

I see Eliza shares in the distress,
Though half the sad recital I suppress. 360
It seem'd as from the queen's malignant eye
All France had caught the signal to destroy ;
Swift from the capital on every side
Death o'er the kingdom stretch'd his banners wide.
Kings.

44 THE HENRIADE. Canto II

Kings in their vengeance are too well obey'd; 36
Whole armies blindly lend their impious aid;
France floats in blood, and all her rivers sweep,
On purple tides, the carnage to the deep.

TH

to II
; 36
pp,



THE

HENRIADE.

CANTO the THIRD.



THE ARGUMENT.

The hero continues the history of the civil wars of France. The unfortunate death of Charles IX. Reign of Henry III. His character. That of the famous duke of Guise, known by the name of Balafre. Battle of Coutras. Murder of the duke of Guise. Extremities to which Henry III. is reduced. Mayenne at the head of the league. D'Aumale the hero of it. Reconciliation of Henry III. and Henry king of Navarre. Queen Elizabeth's answer to Henry of Bourbon.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the THIRD.

WHEN many a day (for thus the fates ordain'd)

With blackest deeds of murder had been stain'd ;
When each assassin cruel, and abhorr'd,
Fatigu'd with crimes, had sheath'd his glutt'd sword;
Those crimes at length the factious crowd alarm'd
Whom zeal had blinded, and their sovereign arm'd.
As rage subsided, melting pity mov'd
Each friend to virtue who his country lov'd ;
Ev'n Charles himself with horror was possess'd,
Remorse and anguish tore his conscious breast. 10
That early culture, by ill fate design'd
To blast the fairer blossoms of his mind.
Conscience subdued :—her whispering voice alone
Can shake with terror the securest throne.

Not all the mother's principles could frame 15

A heart like hers, insensible of shame.

Severe remorse his anxious soul dismay'd,

His strength was wasted, and his youth decay'd.

Heaven mark'd him out in vengeance for his crimes,

A dread example to succeeding times. 20

Myself was present at his latest breath,

And still I shudder at that scene of death,

When, in return for tides of Gallic blood,

Each bursting vein pour'd forth the crimson flood.

Thus fell lamented in his early prime 25

A youthful monarch bred to every crime,

From whose repentance we had hop'd to gain

The balmy blessings of a milder reign.

Soon as he died, with speed advancing forth,

From the bleak bosom of the wintry North, 30

Great Valois came, like some bright orient star,

To claim his birth-right in these realms of war.

On him Polonia had bestow'd her throne,

Deem'd by each province worthy of the crown.

21 He never enjoyed his health after the affair of St. Bartholomew, and died about two years afterwards, May 30, 1574, covered with his own blood, which gushed out from every pore.

33 The reputation he had acquired at Jarnac and Montcontour, supported by French coin, had gained him the election as king of Poland in the year 1573. He succeeded Sigismund II, the last prince of the race of the Jagellons.

Canto III. THE HENRIADE. 49

Great are the dangers of too bright a name, 35

Ev'n Valois sunk beneath the weight of fame :

Though in his cause each danger I defy,

Could toil for ever, and with transport die,

Yet, heaven-born truth, this tongue thy accents
loves,

And only praises what the heart approves. 40

Soon was the race of all his greatness run ;

As morning vapours fly before the sun.

Oft have I mark'd these changes in my mind,

And oft found kings the weakest of mankind ;

Have seen the laurell'd prince in battle brave, 45

Wear the soft chain, and live a courtier's slave.

This fact by long experience have I known,

Seeds of true courage in the mind are sown.

Valois was form'd by heaven's peculiar care

For martial prowess, and the deeds of war : 50

Yet was too weak the rod of power to wield,

Though great in arms, and steady in the field.

Detested minions shew'd their artful skill,

And reign'd supreme the sovereigns of his will.

His voice but dictated their own decrees ; 55

While they, indulging in voluptuous ease,

Drank of each joy which luxury supplies,

And scorn'd to listen to a nation's cries.

D

Unmov'd

Unmov'd he saw afflicted France lament
 Her strength exhausted, and her treasures spent. 60
 Beneath their yoke while Valois tamely bow'd,
 And new oppressions from new taxes flow'd,
 Lo Guise appears ! ambition spurs him on,
 All eyes are fix'd upon this rising sun.
 His deeds of war, the glory of his race, 65
 His manly beauty, and attractive grace ;
 But more than all, that happy, pleasing art,
 Which wins our love, and steals upon the heart,
 Subdued ev'n those whom virtue faintly warms,
 And gain'd their wishes by resistless charms. 70
 None e'er like him could lead the mind astray,
 Or rule the passions with more sovereign sway :
 None e'er conceal'd from busy curious eyes,
 Their dark intentions in so fair disguise :
 Though proud ambition kindled in his soul, 75
 His cooler judgment could that pride controul.
 To gain the crowd, and win deserv'd esteem,
 Detested levies were his daily theme :
 Oft have they heard his flattering tongue declare
 The public sorrows were his only care. 80

63 Henry of Guise, surnamed Balafré born in the year 1550, he was the son of Francis de Guise, and Anne d'Est. He executed the grand project of the League formed by his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and begun by Francis his father.

On modest worth he lavish'd all his store,
 Or cloth'd the naked, or enrich'd the poor.
 Oft would his alms prevent the starting tear,
 And tell that Guise, and charity were near.
 All arts were tried which cunning might afford, 85
 To court the nobles whom his soul abhorr'd :
 Alike to virtue, as to vice inclin'd,
 Or love, or endless hatred rul'd his mind :
 He brav'd all dangers which on arms await, 89
 No chief more bold, none more oppress'd the state.
 When time at length had made his influence strong,
 And fix'd the passions of the giddy throng,
 Stript of disguise unmask'd the traitor shone,
 Defied his sovereign, and attack'd the throne.
 Within our walls the fatal League began, 95
 And next thro' France the dire contagion ran :
 Nurs'd by all ranks the hideous monster stood,
 Pregnant with woes, and rioting in blood.
 Two monarchs rul'd o'er Gallia's hapless land :
 This shar'd alone the shadow of command ; 100
 That wide diffus'd fierce war's destructive flame,
 Master of all things save the royal name.
 Valois awak'd the threatening danger sees,
 And quits the slumbers of lethargic ease.
 But still to ease and indolence a prey, 105
 His eyes are dazzled by the blaze of day.

Though o'er his head the stormy thunders roll,
Nor storms, nor thunders rouse his sluggish soul.
Sweet to his taste the streams of pleasure flow,
And sleep conceals the precipice below. 110
Myself remain'd the next succeeding heir,
To save the monarch, or his ruin share :
Eager I flew his weakness to supply ;
Firmly resolv'd to conquer, or to die.
But Guise, alas ! that fly, dissembling fiend, 115
By craft depriv'd him of his truest friend.
That old pretence thro' all revolving time,
Divine religion, veil'd the horrid crime.
The busy crowd fictitious virtue warm'd,
With zeal inspir'd them, and with fury arm'd. 120
Before their eyes in lively tints he drew
That ancient worship which their fathers knew ;
From new-born sects declar'd what ills had flow'd,
And painted Bourbon as a foe to God. 124
" Thro' all your climes, forbid it heaven ! he said,
" His tenets flourish, and his errors spread :
" Yon walls, that cast a sacred horror round,
" Will soon be sunk, and levell'd with the ground :
" Soon will you see unhallow'd temples rise,
" And point their airy summits to the skies : 130
" So lov'd by Bourbon, so ador'd has been
" The curst example of Britannia's queen."

Scarce

Scarce had he spoke, when lo ! the public fear
 Was swiftly waisted to the royal ear.
 Nay more, the Leaguers issue Rome's decree, 135
 And curse the monarch that unites with me.
 Now was this arm prepar'd to strike the blow,
 Pour forth its strength, and thunder on the foe ;
 When Valois, won by subtle, dark intrigue,
 Fix'd on my ruin, and obey'd the League. 140
 Unnumber'd soldiers arm'd in dread array
 Fill'd every plain, and spoke the king's dismay.
 With grief I saw such jealousy disclos'd,
 Bewail'd his weakness, and his power oppos'd.
 The League's confederate cities were alarm'd, 145
 And to oppose me hostile thousands arm'd ;
 Each passing hour beheld new armies rise,
 Led on by fierce Joyeuse, and valiant Guise.
 Guise, form'd alike for prudence as for war,
 Dispers'd my friends, and baffled all their care. 150

148 *Joyeuse.*] Anne duke of Joyeuse had married the sister of Henry the third's wife ; and on his embassy to Rome was treated as the king's brother. He had a soul worthy of his great fortune. One day having made two secretaries of state wait too long in the king's antichamber, he excused himself by presenting them 100,000 crowns, which the king just given him. He fought the battle of Coutras against Henry IV. then king of Navarre, on the 20th of October, 1587. His army was compared to that of Darius, and Henry's to that of Alexander.

54 THE HENRIADE. Canto III.

Still undismay'd, such strength my valour boasts,
I press'd thro' myriads of embattled hosts.

Thro' all the field I fought the proud Joyeuse;—
No more—the rest Eliza will excuse :

More of that chief 'twere needless to relate, 155
You've heard his end, and fame has spread his fate.

“ Not so,—the queen with eagerness replied,

“ Well hast thou spoke with modesty thy guide ;

“ But deign to tell me what I wish to hear,

“ Such themes are worthy of Eliza's ear: 160

“ Joyeuse his fall in vivid colours draw ;

“ Go on, and paint thy conquest at Coutras.”

Touch'd with these words the hero bow'd his head ;
An honest blush his manly cheek o'erspread ;

Much he regrets to speak his glorious deeds, 165
But by the queen commanded, thus proceeds.

Of all, who Valois could by flattery move,
Who nurs'd his weakness, and enjoy'd his love,
Joyeuse illustrious best deserv'd to share

The brightest sunshine of his royal care: 170

If to his years the stern decree of fate

Had fix'd some period of a longer date,

In noble exploits had his virtue shone,

And Guise's greatness not excell'd his own.

But

Canto III. THE HENRIADE. 55

But vice o'er virtue gain'd superior force, 175
Court was his cradle, luxury his nurse :
Yet dar'd the amorous chieftain to oppose
Unskilful valour to experienc'd foes.
From pleasure's downy lap the courtiers came
To guard his person, and to share his fame. 180

In gay attire each gallant youth was dress'd ;
Some cypher glitter'd on each martial vest ;
Some dear distinction, such as lovers wear,
To tell the fondness of the yielding fair :
The costly sapphire, or the diamond's rays, 185
O'er their rich armour shed the vivid blaze.
Thus deck'd by folly, thus elate and vain,
These troops of Venus issued to the plain :
Swift march'd their ranks, as tumult led the way,
Unwisely brave, and impotently gay. 190
My hardy host, drawn up in manner due,
Far other scenes were open'd to the view :
An army, silent as the dead of night,
Display'd its forces well innur'd to fight ;
Men gray in arms, and disciplin'd to blood, 195
Who bravely suffer'd for their country's good.
The only graces that employ'd their care,
Were swords well pointed, and the dress of war.

Like them array'd, and steady to my trust,
 I led the squadrons cover'd o'er with dust: 200
 Like them ten thousand deaths I dar'd to face,
 Distinguish'd only by my rank, and place.
 These eyes beheld the brilliant foe o'erthrown,
 Expiring legions, and the field our own.
 Deep in their breasts I plung'd the fatal spear, 205
 And wish'd some Spanish bosom had been there.
 Still shall my tongue their honest praises tell;
 Firm in his post each youthful courtier fell,
 And bravely struggled to his latest breath
 Amidst the terrors of surrounding death. 210
 Our filken sons of pleasure and of ease,
 Preserve their valour in the midst of peace:
 Call'd forth to war, they bravely scorn to yield;
 Servile at court, but heroes in the field.
 Joyeuse, alas! I tried, in vain, to save; 215
 None heard the orders which my mercy gave;
 His comrades soon I saw, who weeping bore
 His pale, cold corse, with wounds all cover'd o'er.
 Thus some fair flower, whose opening buds display
 Their flagrant blossoms to the dawn of day, 220
 Which decks the early scene, and fresh appears
 With Zephyr's kisses, and Aurora's tears,
 Too soon decays, on nature's lap reclin'd,
 Cropt by the scythe, or scatter'd by the wind.

But

Canto III, THE HENRIADE. 57

But why should memory recall to view 225
 Those horrid triumphs to oblivion due?
 Conquests so gain'd for ever cease to charm,
 While Gallic blood still blushes on my arm.
 Those beams of grandeur with false lustre shone,
 And tears bedew the laurels which I won. 230
 Unhappy Valois! that ill-fated day
 Shower'd down on thee dishonour, and dismay.
 Paris grew proud, the League's submission less,
 And Guise's glory doubled thy distress:
 For Vimory saw Guise the sword unsheath, 235
 Germania suffer'd for Joyeuse's death:
 Auneau beheld my army of allies
 Yield to his power, defeated by surprize.
 Thro' Paris streets he march'd with haughty air,
 Array'd in laurels, and the pride of war. 240
 Ev'n Valois tamely to his insults bow'd,
 And serv'd this idol of the gazing crowd.
 Shame will at length the coolest courage warm,
 And give new vigor to the weakest arm:

235 *Saw Guise the sword unsheath*] At the time when the king's army was defeated at Courras, the duke of Guise showed himself an able general by harassing a numerous army of German horse (which came to the assistance of Henry IV.) and afterwards defeating them in the village of Auneau.

58 THE HENRIADE. Canto III.

Such vile affronts made Valois less incline 245
To offer incense at so mean a shrine.

Too late he tried his greatness to restore,
And reign the monarch he had liv'd before :
Now deem'd a tyrant by the factious crew,
Nor loyal fear, nor love his subjects knew. 250

All Paris arms, sedition spreads the flame,
And headstrong mutiny asserts her claim :
Encircling troops raise high the hostile mound,
Besiege his palace, and his guards surround.
Guise undisturb'd, amidst the raging storm, 255
Gave it a milder, or severer form ;

Rul'd the mad tumult of rebellious spleen,
And guided, as he pleas'd, the great machine.
All had been lost, and Valois doom'd to die
By one command, one glance of Guise's eye ; 260
But when each arm was ready for the blow,
Compassion sooth'd the fierceness of the foe ;
Enough were deem'd the terrors of the fight,
And meek-eyed pity gave the power of flight.

Guise greatly err'd, such subjects all things dare,
Their king must perish, or themselves despair.
This day confirm'd, and strengthen'd in his schemes,
He saw that all was fatal but extremes:

Himself must mount the scaffold or the throne,
The lord of all things, or the lord of none. 270

Canto III. THE HENRIADE. 59

Thro' Gallia's realms ador'd, from conquest vain,
Aided by Rome, and patroniz'd by Spain ;
Pregnant with hope, and absolute in power,
He thought those iron ages to restore,
When erst our kings in mouldering cloisters liv'd,
In early infancy of crowns depriv'd: 276
In hallow'd shades they wept the hours away,
While tyrants govern'd with oppressive sway.
Valois, indignant at so high a crime,
Delay'd his vengeance to some better time. 280
Our states at Blois were summon'd to appear,
And fame, no doubt, has told you what they were.
In barren streams from oratory's tongue
Smooth flow'd the tide of eloquence along ;
Laws were propos'd whose power none e'er per-
ceiv'd, 285
And ill lamented which none e'er reliev'd.

Guise in the midst, with high imperious pride,
Was vainly seated by his sovereign's side.
Sure of success, he saw around the throne,
Or thought he saw, no subjects but his own. 290
These sons of infamy, this venal band
Were ready to bestow supreme command,
When Valois' power was destin'd to appear,
And burst the chains of mercy and of fear.

60 THE HENRIADE. Canto III.

Each day his rival studied to attain 295
 The mean, the odious triumphs of disdain ;
 Nor deem'd that ever such a prince could show
 Those stern resolves which strike th'assassin's blow.
 Blinded by fate he hurried to his doom,
 The hour of destiny at length was come : 300
 Disgrac'd with wounds before the royal eye
 The mighty victim was condemn'd to die.
 All pale, and cover'd by the crimson tide,
 This sun descended in his native pride.
 The parting soul, by thirst of glory fir'd, 305
 In life's last moments to the throne aspir'd.
 Thus fell the powerful chief, assemblage rare
 Of foulest vices, and perfections fair.
 Tame in submission, and in vengeance base,
 Valois resum'd the sceptre with disgrace. 310
 Soon did the dire report thro' Paris spread,
 That heaven was injur'd, and that Guise was dead.
 The young, the old with unavailing sighs
 Display'd their grief, and join'd their plaintive cries.
 The softer sex invok'd the powers above, 315
 And clasp'd his statues in the arms of love.

307 *Thus fell*] He was assassinated in the king's antichamber at Blois, on Friday the 23d of December, 1588. The king himself distributed the poignards among the assassins.

The sword all Paris to revenge him draws,
 Resolv'd to vindicate religion's cause.
 Mayenne, the brother of the chief, inspires
 Their vengeance, and adds fuel to their fires : 320
 But more by interest, than resentment mov'd,
 The flame augmented, and their zeal approv'd.
 Mayenne, with Guise innur'd to war's alarms,
 Was nurs'd in battle, and train'd up to arms :
 His brother's equal in each dark intrigue, 325
 And now the lord and glory of the League.
 Thus highly rais'd, thus eminently great,
 He griev'd no longer for his brother's fate :
 But better pleas'd to govern, than obey,
 Forgot the loss, and wip'd his tears away. 330
 Mayenne, with soul to generous deeds inclin'd,
 A statesman's cunning, and a hero's mind,
 By subtle arts unnumber'd followers draws
 To yield him homage, and sustain his cause.
 Skilful ev'n good from evil to produce, 335
 Full well he knows their talents, and their use.
 Though brighter splendors dazzled all our eyes,
 Not greater dangers ever rose from Guise.

323. *Mayenne, &c.*] The duke of Mayenne, youngest brother of Balafre, killed at Blois, had nearly all the good qualities of his brother.

62 THE HENRIADE. Canto III.

To young Aumale, and this more prudent guide,
 The Leaguers owe their courage, and their pride:
 Aumale, the *great invincible* by name, 341
 Is high exalted in the lists of fame.
 Thro' all their ranks he spreads ambition's fires,
 Presumptuous valour, and his own desires;
 Unshaken in their cause the League protects, 345
 And executes what bold Mayenne directs.

Meantime, the king, whose power the Germans
 dread,
 To deeds inhuman from his cradle bred;
 That tyrant catholic, that artful foe,
 Incens'd at Bourbon, and Eliza too; 350
 Ambitious Philip his dread falchion draws
 To aid our enemies and Mayenne's cause.
 Rome, best employ'd in making wars to cease,
 Lights discord's torch, and bids her fires increase:
 The same fierce views the christian father owns,
 Points the keen blade, and animates his sons. 356

351 *Ambitious Philip*] Philip II. king of Spain, the son of Charles V. He was called the Demon of the South, because he troubled all Europe, on the south of which Spain is situated. He sent powerful succours to the League, with a design to make the crown of France fall to the Infanta Clara Eugenia, or to some prince of his family.

Canto III. THE HENRIADE. 63

From Europe's either end the torrent falls :
Uniting sorrows burst upon our walls.
Weak, and defenceless in this evil hour
Valois relented, and implor'd my power : 360
Humane benevolence my soul approves,
The state commiserates, and Valois loyes :
Impending dangers banish all my ire,
A brother's safety is my sole desire.
With honest zeal I labour for his good ; 365
'Tis duty calls me, and the ties of blood :
I know the royal dignity my own,
And vindicate the honours of the crown :
Nor treaty made, nor hostage ask'd, I came,
And told him, courage was his guide to fame :
On Paris' ramparts bid him cast his eye, 371
And there resolve to conquer, or to die.
These friendly words, thus happily applied,
Thro' all his soul diffus'd a generous pride.
Manners thus chang'd thus resolutely brave 375
The sense of shame, and not example gave :
The serious lessons, which misfortune brings.
Are needful often, and of use to kings.

Thus Henry spoke with honesty of heart,
And begg'd for succours on Eliza's part. 380

Now

Now from the towers where rebel discord stood,
 Conquest recalls him to her scenes of blood.
 The flower of England follows to the plain,
 And cleaves the bosom of the yielding main :
 Essex commands,—the proud Iberian knows 385
 That Essex conquers ev'n the bravest foes :
 Full little deeming that injurious fate
 Should blast his laurels with her keenest hate.
 To France great Henry hastens to repair,
 Eager to grace the theatre of war. 390
 Go, said the queen, thyself, and virtue please ;
 My troops attend thee o'er the swelling seas.
 For thee, not Valois, they endure the fight ;
 Thy cares must guard them, and defend their right.
 From thy example will they scorn to swerve ; 395
 And rather seem to imitate, than serve.
 Who now the sword for valiant Bourbon draws
 Will learn to triumph in Britannia's cause.
 Oh ! may this host thy schemes with conquest
 crown,
 And thy victorious arm the Leaguers own ! 400

385 *Essex commands*] Robert, earl of Essex, famous for his taking Cadiz from the Spaniards ; for the affection shown to him by queen Elizabeth ; and for his tragical death. Elizabeth sent him into France in the year 1590 to the assistance of Henry IV. at the head of 5000 men.

Canto III. THE HENRIADE. 65

Spain is too weak my rebel foes to save,
And Roman thunders never awe the brave.
Go, free mankind, and break the iron chains
Where Sixtus governs, or where Philip reigns.
The cruel Philip, artful as his fire 405
In all that views of interest may require,
Tho' less renown'd in war, less great, and brave,
Divisions spreads in order to enslave ;
Forms in his palace each ambitious scheme, 409
And boundless triumphs are his darling theme.

The low-born Sixtus, with less power endow'd,
Is equally usurping, fierce, and proud :
Mont Alto's shepherd monarchs would o'ercome,
And dictate laws in Paris, as at Rome :
Safe in the honours which adorn his brow, 415
To Philip, and to all mankind a foe :
As serves his cause, or insolent, or meek,
Rival of Kings, and tyrant o'er the weak.
Thro' every clime, with faction at their head,
Ev'n to our court his dark intrigues have spread.
These mighty rulers fear not to defy ; 421
They both have dar'd Eliza's power to try :

404 Pope Sixtus V. who from having been a shepherd's boy
rose to the Papal throne.

Witness, ye seas ! how Philip fought in vain
 With English valour, and the stormy main :
 These shores beheld the proud Armada lost : 425
 Yon purple billows bore the floating host :
 Rome's pontiff still in quiet silence bears
 The loss of conquest, and our greatness fears.

Display the banners in the martial field ; 429
 Mayenne once conquer'd, Rome herself will yield.
 On thee her friendship, or her wrath depends,
 Stern to the vanquish'd, she to victors bends ;
 Inclined alike to pardon, or to brand,
 'Tis thine to strike the thunder from her hand.

425 *Armada lost*] This event was then very recent ; for Henry IV. is supposed to have had a private interview with queen Elizabeth in 1589, and it was but the year before, that the great fleet fitted out by Philip II. for the conquest of England, was defeated by the English, and dispersed by a tempest.



THE

HENRIADE.

CANTO the FOURTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

D'Aumale is upon the point of being master of Henry the third's camp, when the hero returning from England, engages the Leaguers and changes the fortune of the day.

Discord comforts Mayenne, and flies to Rome for succours. Description of Rome. Discord meets with Policy. She returns with her to Paris, causes an insurrection of the Sorbonne; animates the sixteen against the parliament, and arms the Monks. Troubles, and confusion in Paris.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the FOURTH.

WHILE thus sequester'd from the train of
state,

Their glorious interests sagely they debate,
At leisure o'er the princely science stray,
Combat and conquest and imperial sway,
The Seine with terror saw the chiefs combin'd, 5
Spread on his banks their banners to the wind.

Anxious the king, from Henry distant far,
Bewail'd th'uncertain destiny of war;
His cheering aid irresolute he needs,
For victory follows still where Bourbon leads. 10
With triumph the confederate bands beheld
His weak dismay, and eager sought the field;
Chill'd every dreadful hour with fresh alarms,
He saw the whelming torrent of their arms, 1

And prone to change, and hasty to repent,
 Regrets his absence whom himself had sent.

Long with these traitors to their lawful lord,
 Joyeuse's brother drew the factious sword ;
 By turns a soldier, and a saint was he,
 Now all for arms, and now a devotee ;
 Preferr'd, as when inclin'd his various soul,
 One hour the helmet, and the next the cowl.
 He left the scenes of penitence and tears,
 To bark sedition in the Leaguers ears,
 And bath'd remorseless in his country's gore,
 The hand devoted to his God before.

Of all the chiefs for valour most renown'd,
 Whose prowess shed despair and horror round,

18 Henry, younger brother to the duke of Joyeuse, slain at Coutras. Once as he was passing by the convent of the Capuchins at Paris, at four o'clock in the morning, after having spent the night in a debauch, he fancied he heard the angels singing matins in the convent. Struck with this idea, he made himself a Capuchin, by the name of *brother angel*. Afterwards when he quitted the cowl, and took arms against Henry IV the duke of Mayenne made him governor of Languedoc, duke and peer and marshal of France. At length he came to an accommodation with the king: but as he was one day standing with his majesty in a balcony, under which a great multitude were assembled, the king said to him, Cousin, these people seem delighted with seeing an apostate and a renegade together. This speech of Henry's sent him again to his convent, where he died.

Whom

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 71

Whose puissant arms the boldest might appall,
The first in feats of glory was D'Aumale. 30
Sprung from the far-fam'd heroes of Lorrain,
King, laws, and peace alike were his disdain;
The noblest youth his daring steps pursue,
With them incessant to the field he flew,
Now in still march, now shouting from afar, 35
By day, by night he urged the various war,
Assail'd th'unguarded foe on every side,
And with their blood the dusty champaign dyed.
So from proud Caucasus or Athos' height, 39
Where earth, sea, air lie stretch'd before the sight,
With headlong speed the rapid eagle flies,
And vulturs dart along the gloomy skies;
With hungry beaks the feather'd spoil they rend,
Resistless on the bleating flocks descend,
And soaring to their airy cliffs convey, 45
With screams of cruel joy, the living prey.

Once fir'd with glory the bold warrior went,
Disdaining dangers, to the royal tent;

30 The chevalier d'Aumale, brother of the duke d'Aumale, of the house of Lorrain, a young man of an impetuous spirit with many shining qualities; he headed all the sallies during the siege of Paris, and inspired the inhabitants with his own courage and confidence.

Dark was the night and sudden the surprize,
Around the camp a pannic horror flies; 50
The torrent of his arms o'erlooks the mound,
And the big deluge threatens all around.
But when the day-star rais'd his glimmering urn,
Came Mornay to announce his lord's return;
With joyful speed th'impatient chief drew near, 55
When the rough din smote loudly on his ear,
Amaz'd he flies, sees terror and distress
In the king's troops, nor ev'n in Bourbon's less,
"And are you vanquish'd, and is this," he cried,
"Is this the glorious welcome you provide 60
"For Henry, for your Henry?" At that name
Their hearts were flush'd with valour's glowing
flame.

So when the Sabin arms drove trembling home,
Ev'n to the capitol, the bands of Rome,
His guardian God their mighty founder hail'd, 65
And in the name of Stator Jove prevail'd.
Let him, they cry, let Henry lead the fight,
And we must conquer in our Henry's fight.
Keen as the flash that cleaves the stormy cloud,
In the mid camp the dazzling hero stood, 70
Impetuous to the foremost ranks he flies,
Death in his hand, and lightning in his eyes,
Th'am-

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 73

Th'ambitious chiefs crowd fast around his shield,
At once he shifts the fortune of the field,
His stern approach the pale confederates shun, 75
As stars diminish'd fade before the sun.

D'Aumale enraged tries every art in vain
To rally their disorder'd files again :
His voice a while their timorous flight with-held,
But Henry's drove them headlong o'er the field ; 80
His awful front strikes terror thro' the foes,
'Their chief unites them, but their fear o'erthrows ;
'Till ev'n D'Aumale reluctant borne along
Obeys the torrent of the flying throng.

Incumber'd thus with many a winter's snow, 85
Some rock forsakes the mountain's lofty brow,
Sapp'd from beneath, precipitately flies,
And downward rattling, thunders in the skies.

He shows to the besieging powers around
His front so long with matchless glory crown'd, 90
Burst through the multitude, and loathing life,
Seeks in despair once more the mortal strife ;
Restrains awhile the victor's rapid course,
'Till weak, and baffled by superior force,
Each moment he expects the fatal meed, 95
Death the just wages of his hardy deed.

E

But

But Discord, for her darling chief afraid,
 Flies swift to save him, for she needs his aid,
 Between her champion and the foe, she held
 Her massy, broad, impenetrable shield, 100
 Whose sight, or rage, or terror can convey,
 Omen of death, and meteor of dismay.
 Offspring of Hell ! from her infernal cave
 Then first she came, to succour and to save ;
 Then first her hand, dire instrument of death, 105
 Redeem'd from instant fate a hero's breath.
 Forth from the field, her minion, cover'd o'er
 With wounds unfelt amid his toil she bore,
 Her healing art she on his wounds bestow'd,
 And stanch'd that blood that for her service flow'd.
 But while her labours to his limbs impart 111
 Their wonted health, her venom taints his heart.
 Thus tyrants oft, with treacherous pity, stay
 The wretch's doom, and spare but to betray ;
 Act by his arm the purpose of their hate 115
 And dark revenge, then yield him to his fate.

Bold to atchieve, nor fraught with wisdom less
 To catch th'auspicious moment of success ;
 Victorious Henry urg'd th'important blow,
 And with new fury press'd th'astonish'd foe. 120

Close

Close in their walls their dire disgrace they mourn,
 And dread th'affault, and tremble in their turn.
 Even Valois now, to martial deeds inspir'd
 The troops, himself by Henry's actions fir'd;
 Laughs at all pain, despises all alarms, 125
 And owns ev'n toil and danger have their charms.
 No secret feuds the jarring chiefs confound,
 Their brave attempts were all with glory crown'd;
 Horror, where'er they march, their way prepares,
 The ramparts tremble, and the foe despairs. 130
 What can Mayenne, when such dire woes oppress
 His troops, a people groaning in distress!
 The weeping orphan here her sire demands,
 There brethren claim their brother at his hands;
 Each mourns the present, dreads the future most,
 And disaffection rends the murmuring host. 136
 Some counsel flight, surrender some prefer,
 But all renounce unanimous the war;
 So light the feeble vulgar, and so near
 Their headstrong rashness is allied to fear. 140
 Their ruin he beheld already wrought,
 A thousand plans perplex his labouring thought;
 When Discord by her snaky locks confess'd,
 Stood forth reveal'd, and thus the chief address'd.

August descendent of an awful line, 145
 Whose vengeful soul unites thee firm to mine;
 Form'd by my counsel, modell'd by my laws,
 Know thy protectress, and revere her cause.
 Shall wretches base as these thy fears excite,
 Who freeze with horror at a loss so slight? 150
 Slaves of my power, and vassals of my will,
 Ev'n now our great designs they shall fulfil;
 Let but my breath their dastard bosoms fire,
 They court the combat, and with joy expire.
 She spoke, and rapid as the lightning's flight,
 Glanc'd thro' the clouds, and vanish'd from his
 fight. 156

Around the French she saw confusion lowr,
 And hail'd the fight, and bless'd the welcome hour;
 The teeming earth grew barren as she pass'd,
 And the bright blossoms wither'd at the blast; 160
 Flat in the furrow lies the blighted ear,
 Pale and half quench'd the sickening stars appear;
 Beneath her bursts the thunder's fullen sound,
 And death-like horror seized the nations round.

Dark scowling o'er the flowery vales below, 165
 A whirlwind snatch'd her to the banks of Po.

Towards Rome at length her baleful eye she roll'd,
 Rome, the world's dread, and Discord's fane of old,
 Imperial

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 77

Imperial Rome, by destiny design'd,
In peace, in war, the mistress of mankind : 170
By conquest first she stretch'd her wide domain,
And all earth's monarchs wore her galling chain ;
On arms alone her solid empire grew,
And the world crouch'd where'er her eagle flew.
More peaceful art her modern rule supports, 175
Now ev'n her victors tremble in her courts ;
Deep rooted in their hearts her power she sees,
And needs no thunder but her own decrees.

High on that gorgeous wreck of ancient war,
Where Mars for ages drove his rattling car, 180
A pontiff now maintains his priestly state,
And fills the throne where once the Cæsars sate.
There wandering heedless of the mighty dead,
Monastic feet on Cato's ashes tread, 184
On God's own altar there the throne they raise,
And a priest's hand the cross and sceptre sways.

There first his infant church th'Almighty plac'd,
By turns with zeal rejected, or embrac'd ;
There heaven's high will his first apostle taught,
In native truth and singleness of thought. 190
Scarce meaner praise his successors acquir'd,
And they were honour'd most, who least aspir'd ;

No foppery then their modest brow adorn'd,
 All praise but virtue, and all wealth they scorn'd,
 And flew with rapture from their low abode, 195
 To die triumphant in the cause of God.

Deprav'd at length they scorn'd their humble state,
 And heaven, for man's offences, made them great;
 Ambition then profan'd the sacred shrine,
 And human power was grafted on divine; 200

The lurking dagger and the poisoning bowl,
 Were the dark basis of their new controul.

Vicegerents of the Lord, his holy place
 With brutal lust they blush'd not to disgrace,
 'Till Rome, oppress'd beneath her hateful reign,
 Sigh'd for her fabled deities again. 206

A wiser race more modern times beheld,
 Who crimes like these or wrought not, or conceal'd:

Then kings appeal'd to Rome's decisive power,
 And chose their umpire, whom they fear'd before;
 Humility once more and meekness shone 211
 Renew'd, beneath the proud pontific crown.

But pious fraud and priestcraft in these days,
 Are Rome's chief virtue, and her worthiest praise.

Now

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 79

Now in the pomp of apostolic state 215
Supreme, and crown'd with empire, Sixtus fate;
If fraud and churlish insolence might claim
Renown, no monarch bore a fairer name.
Long time he sculk'd beneath the driver's-part
Disguis'd, and owed his greatness to his art; 220
Long seem'd unworthy what he sigh'd to gain,
And shun'd it long, the surer to obtain.

Deep in his palace, secret and unseen,
Dwelt dark-veil'd Policy, mysterious queen;
Unsocial interest and ambition join'd, 225
Of yore, to spawn this pest of human kind.
Her smiles a free untroubled soul express'd,
Tho' cares unnumber'd swarm'd within her breast;
Keen were her haggard eyes, nor knew to close
Their wakeful lids, nor would admit repose; 230
Thick woven films o'er Europe's sight she spreads,
Confounds her counsels, and her kings misleads;
Calls truth itself to testify a fraud,
And stamps imposture with the seal of God.

216. Sixtus the fifth when he was cardinal of Montalto, counterfeited the idiot so artfully for fifteen years, that he was commonly called the Ass of Ancona. It is well known by what contrivances he obtained the papacy, and with what haughtiness he governed.

When first the phantom Discord met her view,
 With instant rapture to her arms she flew; 236
 Then smil'd a ghastly grin, but sighing soon,
 As one o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, thus begun :
 I see, alas ! those happy times no more,
 When thoughtless multitudes ador'd my power; 240
 When Europe credulous obey'd my laws,
 And mix'd with mine religion's sacred cause.
 I spoke, and kings from their exalted seat
 Came trembling down, and worship'd at my feet ;
 From the high Vatican my thunders hurl'd, 245
 And fill'd with war's alarms the distant world.
 Ev'n life and death confess'd my proud domain,
 And monarchs reign'd by me, or ceas'd to reign.

248. During the wars in the thirteenth century, between the emperors and the popes, Gregory IX. had the hardness not only to excommunicate the emperor Frederic II. but even to offer the imperial crown to Robert, the brother of St. Lewis. The parliament of France assembled, answered in the name of the king, that the pope could not lawfully depose a sovereign, nor the brother of a king of France receive from the hand of the pope, a crown over which neither he nor St. Peter had any right. In 1570 the sitting parliament issued a famous arret against the bull *in cænâ domini*.

The celebrated remonstrances made by the parliament under Lewis XI. on the subject of the pragmatic sanction, are well known, as are those likewise which they made to Henry III. against the scandalous bull of Sixtus the fifth, which called the reigning family, *a generation of bastards*, &c. and the continual fortitude with which they always maintained our liberties against the pretensions of the court of Rome.

Now

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 81

Now France subdues my lightnings e'er they fly,
And quench'd and smother'd, in my grasp, they
die. 250

Religion's friend, she thwarts my slighted arms,
And breaks my philtres, and dispels my charms;
Truth's borrow'd guise in vain did I display,
She first discern'd, and tore the mask away.

But oh! what joy, could I delude her now, 255
At least avenge my sufferings on my foe.

Come then! my lightnings with my torch restore,
And France shall feel us, and the world once more;
Our bonds again, earth's haughty lords shall wear,
Again—she spoke, and pierced the yielding air.

Remote from Rome, where vanity and pride, 261
In temples sacred to themselves, reside,

Conceal'd from sight, within her humble cell,
Religion, pensive maid, delights to dwell.

There angels hover round her calm abode, 265
And waft her raptures to the throne of God.

Mean-while, the sanction of her injur'd name
Th'oppressor's wrong, and tyrant's fury claim;

Yet doom'd to suffer, no revenge she knows,
But melts in silent blessings on her foes. 270

Her artless charms their modest lustre shroud
For ever from the vain tumultuous crowd,

Who without faith their impious vows prefer,
 And pray to fortune, while they kneel to her.
 In Henry she beheld her future son, 275
 And knew the fates had mark'd him for her own ;
 With sighs to speed the destin'd hour she strove,
 And view'd and watch'd him with a seraph's love.

Sudden the fiends their awful foe surprize ;
 The captive lifts to heaven her streaming eyes ; 280
 In vain for help to heaven Religion pray'd :
 To prove her, God awhile with-held his aid.
 Soon in her snowy veil and holy weeds
 The monsters muffle their detested heads,
 Then fir'd with hope, and glorying in their might,
 Stretch swift to Paris their impetuous flight. 286

Deep in the Sorbonne, in august debate,
 The sage expounders of heaven's dictates sate :
 Their faith unshaken, loyalty unfeign'd,
 Their tongues the oracles of truth explain'd ; 290
 Sway'd by no error, by no fear controul'd,
 With hearts upright, and masculine, and bold.
 Alas ! what human virtue never errs !
 Behold the tempter ! Policy appears ;

279. Policy and Discord.

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 83

Smooth was the melting flattery of her tongue, 295
And on her artful lips persuasion hung.
The dazzling mitre and the sweeping train,
With ease allure th'ambitious and the vain ;
With secret bribes the miser's voice she buys ;
With decent praise, the learned and the wise ; 300
From each his virtue by some art she stole,
And shook with sounding threats the coward's soul.

Their counsels now with riot they disgrace,
Truth heard the din alarm'd, and fled the place.
When thus a sage the general voice exprefs'd :
“ Kings are the creatures of the church confess'd ;
“ Chastized or pardon'd as her laws decree :
“ That church, and guardians of those laws,
are we ;
“ Annull'd and cancell'd are the vows we swore ;
“ Such is our will, and Valois reigns no more.” 310

309. On the 17th of January, 1589, the faculty of Theology in Paris awarded that famous decree, by which it was declared, that the subject was released from his oath of allegiance, and might lawfully make war upon the king. Le Fevre, the Dean, and some of the wisest refused to sign it. Afterwards, when the Sorbonne were set at liberty, they revoked this decree, which the tyranny of the League had extorted from some of their society. All the religious orders who, like the Sorbonne, had declared themselves against the royal family, like them retracted. But would they have retracted, had the house of Lorraine succeeded ?

84 THE HENRIADE. Canto IV.

Scarce was the curst decree pronounc'd aloud,
But secret transport touch'd the sable crowd ;
Inhuman Discord copied it in blood,
And sign'd and sworn the fatal record stood.

From church to church, with irresistible speed
The fiend divulges their adventurous deed ; 316
Where'er she came her faintly garb bespoke
Esteem, and sage and holy was her look.
Forth from their gloomy cells she calls amain
The meagre slaves of voluntary pain ; 320
Behold in me Religion's self, she cries,
Assert my rights, and let your zeal arise ;
'Tis I approach you, 'tis my voice you hear,
For proof, mark well the flaming sword I bear,
Of temper'd lightning is that edge divine, 325
And God's own hand intrusted it to mine.
Let not your worth these gloomy cells conceal,
Shine forth examples of religious zeal ;
Go, tell the wavering French 'tis God's high will,
'Tis merit their devoted king to kill. 330
Think how the ministry by special grace
Was given of old to Levi's holy race ;
Jehovah's self pronounc'd that glory due
To their deserts, when Israel's sons they slew.

Where

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 85

Where are, alas ! those times of triumph fled, 335
 When by the brother's arm the victim bled ?
 Ye priests devout, your spirit was their guide,
 'Twas by your hands alone Coligny died ;
 'Twas then the slaughter raged, go forth, explain
 My voice abroad, and let it rage again. 340

She spoke, and wav'd the signal ; every heart
 Throbb'd with the poison of the beldam's art.
 To Paris next their solemn march she led,
 High o'er the midst the banner'd cross was spread,
 And hymns and holy songs they chaunted loud,
 As heaven itself their impious cause avow'd. 346
 Ev'n on their knees their frenzy they declare,
 And mix a pious curse in every prayer :
 Bold in the pulpit, timorous in the field,
 With uncouth arm the ponderous sword they wield,
 Their penitential shirts the zealot's hide 351
 Beneath their canker'd armour's clumsy pride ;

344. When Henry III. and the king of Navarre appeared in arms before Paris, most of the monks put on armour and mounted guard with the citizens. This passage in the poem nevertheless alludes to the procession of the League, in which 1200 armed monks were reviewed in Paris, having William Rose, bishop of Senlis at their head. The fact is mentioned here, though it did not happen till after the death of Henry III.

And

And thus th'inglorious band in foul array
 Thro' tides of gazing rabble sped their way ;
 They meant to wallow in their brethren's gore,
 While at their head the God of peace they bore.

Mayenne with pomp of public praise adorn'd
 Their wild attempt, which in his heart he scorn'd.
 For well he knew fanatic rage would pass
 For sound religion with the common class, 360
 Nor wanted he the princely craft, to court
 And sooth the follies of the meaner sort.
 The soldier laugh'd, the sage with frowns survey'd
 Their antick pageantry and mad parade,
 The many rend the skies with loud applause, 365
 And hail the reverend bulwarks of their cause.
 Their daring rashness first to fear gave way,
 And frenzy now succeeds to their dismay.
 The angel thus that rules th'obedient main,
 Can smooth the waves, or wake the storm again.

Now Discord from the tribe of Valois' foes, 371
 Twice eight, the rankest of the faction chose ;

372. It is not meant that there were but sixteen individuals lifted in the faction, as the Abbé le Gendre has remarked in his little history of France ; but they were called the Sixteen, from the sixteen quarters of Paris which they governed by their spies and their emissaries.

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 87

Slaves of the queen, their ready aid they lend,
 With her the bloody chariot they ascend ;
 While Pride and Fury, Perfidy and Death, 375
 With streams of slaughter mark'd the road beneath.
 Mayenne disdain'd to see the minions stand
 So near himself, his equals in command,
 But fellowship in guilt all rank destroys,
 As great the wretch who serves, as who employs.
 So when the winds, fierce tyrants of the deep, 381
 The Seine or Rhone with rapid fury sweep,
 Black rises from below the stagnant mud,
 And stains the silver surface of the flood.
 So when some dreadful conflagration reigns, 385
 Which levels cities with the lowly plains,
 The mingling metals in one mass are roll'd,
 And worthless dross incrusts the purest gold.
 Themis alone, unbiass'd by their crimes,
 Escapes the foul contagion of the times ; 390
 With her, nor hope of power nor fear prevail,
 But still well-poised she trim'd the steady scale,
 No spots the lustre of her shrine impair,
 But justice finds a sacred refuge there.

378. The Sixteen were long independent of the duke of Mayenne : one of them named Normand, said once in the duke's chamber, they who had made him, could easily unmake him.

There,

There, foes to vice, and Equity their guide, 395
 An awful senate o'er the laws preside,
 Those laws they both interpret and support,
 And balance still the people and the court ;
 True to the crown, yet anxious for the state,
 Tyrants alike and rebels are their hate ; 400
 Firm their allegiance still, though free and brave,
 They scorn to sink the subject to the slave,
 Rome and the Roman power, full well they know,
 Know to respect it, and to curb it too.

Chos'n from the League, a furious troop beset
 The portal, and invade the still retreat ; 405
 Buffy, than whom no chief might better claim
 That bad pre-eminence, their leader came ;
 And thus the ruffian, proud of the command
 He bore, bespoke the venerable band. 410

“ Ye, who for pay, plebeians as you are,
 “ Think kings committed to your guardian care,

407. On the 16th of January, 1589, Buffy le Clerc, one of the Sixteen, who from a fencing master was become governor of the Bastile, and chief of the faction, entered the grand chamber of the parliament, followed by fifty guards. He presented to them a request, or rather an order to compel them to renounce the royal family. On their refusal he himself imprisoned in the Bastile all those who opposed his party. There he made them fast upon bread and water, that they might be the readier to ransom themselves out of his custody, for which reason he was called the Grand Penitentiary of the Parliament.

" Yet still when public feuds and broils prevail,
 " Set the mean trappings of your rank to sale,
 " Timorous in war, in peace a blustering train, 415
 " Hear what your lords, the commonwealth, ordain.
 " Societies were form'd ere kings were made,
 " We claim the rights our ancestors betray'd ;
 " The people, whom your arts enslaved before,
 " Discern the cheat, and will be slaves no more.
 " Truce with the pomp of titles then, away 421
 " With every sound of arbitrary sway,
 " Draw from the people's rights your power alone,
 " Friends of the state, nor bondsmen of the throne."

He spoke, and scorn appear'd in every eye, 425
 Nor censure else vouchsafed they, or reply.
 So when of old within her ruin'd wall
 Rome in dismay receiv'd the conquering Gaul,
 Undaunted still her awful senate sate,
 Calm as in peace, nor trembled at their fate. 436

" Tyrants he cried with fury, though not free
 " From secret dread, obey or follow me."
 Then, fam'd for worth and fearless of his foes,
 Their honour'd chief, illustrious Harlay, rose,
 And claim'd his fetters with so stern a tone, 435
 As for their hands he sought them, not his own.

At

At once his hoary brethren of the laws,
 Ambitious victims in the royal cause,
 And proud to share their Harlay's glorious pains,
 With outstretch'd arms received the traitor's chains,
 The gathering multitude around them pours, 441
 And crowds attend them to those dreary towers,
 Where vengeance, undistinguishing in blood,
 Too oft confounds the guilty and the good.

Thus sinks the state, o'erthrown by rebel hands,
 No more the Senate nor the Sorbonne stands. 446
 But why this concourse, why this piercing cry?
 These instruments by which the guilty die?
 Say, for whose punishment this pomp design'd?
 For theirs—the first, the noblest of mankind. 450
 So fare the just in Paris; such reward
 For patriots here, and heroes, is prepar'd.
 Yet hapless sufferers, no disgrace invades
 Your honest fame, nor blush your injur'd shades,
 Your fate was glorious, and whoe'er like you 455
 Dies for his king, shall die with glory too.

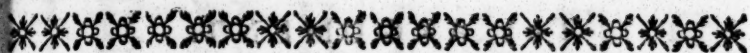
442. The Bastille.

450. On Friday November 15, 1591, Barnaby Brisson, a person of great knowledge, who executed the office of chief president in the absence of Achilles de Harlay, Claude Larcher, counsellor of the inquests, and Jean Tardiff, counsellor of the Châtelet, were hanged in the Little Châtelet by order of the Sixteen.

Canto IV. THE HENRIADE. 91

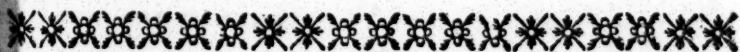
O'erjoy'd mean while, and revelling in blood,
Amidst her bands triumphant Discord flood,
Self-satisfied, with well-contented air,
She saw the dire effects of civil war, 460
Saw thousands leagu'd against their monarch's life,
Yet ev'n themselves divided and at strife,
Dupes of her power, and servants of her hate,
Push the mad war, and urge their country's fate,
Saw peril, strife within, without abound, 465
And Carnage, Death, and Ruin rage around.

THE



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the FIFTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

The besieged are very sharply pressed. Discord persuades Clement to go to Paris, and assassinate the king. He is conducted by Fanaticism, whom Discord calls for that purpose from the infernal regions. Sacrifice of the Leaguers to the spirits of darkness. Henry III. is assassinated. Sentiments of Henry IV. upon the occasion. He is acknowledged king of France, by the army.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the FIFTH.

NOW marching on, those dread machines appear'd,

Which death attended, and the rebels fear'd.

A hundred mouths pour'd forth the rapid balls,

And iron tempests rattled on the walls.

Vain was the fierce revolted people's rage, 5

And vain the prudence of Mayenne the sage;

The guards of Paris, and the noisy crowd,

Censorious doctors, insolent and loud,

Tried, but in vain, our hero to subdue,

Beneath whose feet victorious laurels grew. 10

By Rome, and Philip, were the thunders hurl'd:

But Rome diffus'd no terrors through the world;

His native sloth the old Iberian show'd,

And all his succours were too late bestow'd.

Through

Thro' Gallia's realms the plundering troops enjoy'd
 The spoils of cities which their arms destroy'd. 16
 An easy conquest o'er oppress'd allies
 Was first, and fairest in the traitor's eyes.
 The falling League but waited to receive
 Whate'er the pride of tyranny could give, 20
 When fate, that governs with supreme command,
 Appear'd suspended by a zealot's hand.

Forgive, ye citizens, whose peaceful days
 Are calm, and brightened by serener rays,
 Forgive the bard who paints the horrid crimes 25
 That stain'd the annals of preceding times :
 Yourself unfullied may the lays approve,
 Whose hearts are warm with loyalty, and love.

In every age, some venerable seer
 For heaven's pure joys has shed the pious tear : 30
 Some rigid anchorets with vows divine
 Have heap'd their incense on religion's shrine ;
 Lost to the world, to each idea lost
 That friendship loves, or charity can boast :
 Their gloomy shades, and cloisters ever rude, 35
 The beams of fair humanity exclude.
 Others in flowing periods have display'd
 Religion's truths by learning's powerful aid.

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 97

In these ambition has produc'd desires
 Mean, and unworthy virtue's sacred fires. 40
 Oft have their schemes extended far, and wide,
 And all their piety been sunk in pride.
 Thus ever by perverse abuses still
 The higheft good becomes the greateft ill.
 Those, who the life of Dominic embrac'd, 45
 First in esteem were by Iberia plac'd:
 From mean employments have with lustre shone:
 Oft reach'd the palace, and approach'd the throne:
 In France they flourish'd in the days of yore,
 With equal zeal, but far unequal power: 50
 The kindly patronage, from kings deriv'd,
 Might still attend them, had not Clement liv'd.
 The soul of Clement, gloomy, and austere,
 Was form'd to virtues rigid, and severe.
 Soon as the torrent of rebellion flow'd, 55
 The tide he follow'd, and pronounc'd it good,
 Fell Discord rising had profusely shed
 Infernal poisons o'er his youthful head.

52 Clement] James Clement of the order of Dominicans, born at Sorbonne, a village near Sens, was twenty years of age, and came to Paris to receive priest's orders when he assassinated Henry.

The long-drawn isle, and venerable shrine 59
 Witness what prayers fatigued the powers divine:
 This was their form, before the throne of grace,
 While dust, and ashes sanctified his face.

“ Almighty Being, whose avenging arm
 “ Protects religion, and her sons from harm,
 “ How long shall justice sleep, or tyrants live, 65
 “ The perjur’d flourish, and oppression thrive?
 “ To us, O God, thy gracious mercies deal,
 “ Thy fiery scourges let the sinner feel :
 “ Dispel death’s horrid gloom, assist the brave,
 “ And crush the tyrant, whom thy fury gave. 70
 “ Before thy face destroying angels send,
 “ Rouse all thy thunders, and in flames descend;
 “ Descend, and quell the sacrilegious host,
 “ Defeat their triumphs, and confound their boast:
 “ Let ruin seize, great sovereign lord of all, 75
 “ Kings, chiefs, and armies in one common fall:
 “ As gathering storms the leaves of autumn bear
 “ O’er hills, and vallies through the fields of air:
 “ The League shall praise thy name with holy
 tongue, 79
 “ While blood, and murder elevate the song.”

Discord, attentive, heard his hideous cries,
 And swift to hell’s tremendous regions flies :

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 99

From those dark realms the worst of tyrants came,
Fanatic Demon is his horrid name;

Religion's son, but rebel in her cause, 85

He tears her bosom, and disdains her laws:

'Twas he that guided Ammon's frantic race,

Where silver Arnon winds his liquid maze;

When weeping mothers, with mad zeal possess'd,

Slew their fond infants clinging to the breast: 90

Thro' him, rash Jephthah vow'd; the fiend im-
bued

The father's dagger in the daughter's blood.

By him the impious Calchas was inspir'd,

And lovely Iphigenia's death requir'd.

Thy forests, France, the cruel power approv'd; 95

There smok'd the incense which dire Teutat lov'd:

Thy shades have seen the human victims bleed,

While hoary druids authoriz'd the deed.

From Rome's proud capitol he gave the word,

When christians shuddered at the pagan sword:

When Rome submitted to the son of God, 101

High o'er the church he wav'd his iron rod.

88. *Where silver Arnon, &c.*] The country of the Ammonites, who cast their children into the flames, with drums beating, and trumpets sounding, in honour of the deity whom they adored under the name of Moloch.

96. *Teutat.*] Teutat or Theutat, the same as Mercury, one of the Gods of the Gauls, to whom human sacrifices were offered.

100 THE HENRIADE. Canto V.

Christians, once doom'd to feel the torturing flame,
Were deaf to mercy, and unmov'd by shame.

On Thames's banks the seeds of faction grew, 105
Whose bloody arm the feeble monarch slew.

The same fierce genius fans the yearly fire
At Lisbon, or Madrid, when Jews expire,
Unwilling to desert the cause of heaven,
Or quit the faith their ancestors have given. 110

Like some high priest his part the Demon play'd
In the pure vest of innocence array'd :

Now, from the wardrobe of eternal night,
For other crimes equipp'd, he sprung to light.

Deceit, for ever plausible, and fair, 115
Dress'd him like Guise in person, height, and air:

The haughty Guise, whose artifice alone
Enchain'd the little monarch on his throne,
Whose power still working, like some fatal star,
Foreboded ruin, and inspir'd to war. 120

The dreaded helmet glitter'd on his head ;
The sword, prepar'd for every murderous deed,

106 *Whose bloody arm, &c.*] Those enthusiasts who were called *Independents*, were the persons who chiefly occasioned the death of Charles I. king of England.

122. *The sword, &c.*] There was printed and publicly sold at Paris, in the year 1589, an account of the martyr brother James Clement, in which it is asserted that an angel appeared to him showed him a naked sword, and bid him kill the tyrant.

Flam'd in his hand ;—and many a wound could tell
 How once at Blois the factious hero fell :
 For vengeance calling loud, the crimson tide 125
 Fast flow'd in copious streams adown his side.

Clad in this mournful garb, when night had shed
 Her peaceful slumbers over Clement's head,
 In that still hour, when horrid spectres meet,
 He sought the zealot in his calm retreat : 130
 Cabal, and superstition, nurse of sin,
 Unbarr'd the doors, and let the chieftan in.

“ The prayers he cried, have reach'd Jehovah's
 ears,

“ But vain are prayers, and unavailing tears ; 134

“ The League's just God will other offerings claim ;

“ More fit, more worthy of his holy name :

“ Far other incense must adorn his shrine :

“ Offerings more pure, and worship more divine.

“ Had Judith only importun'd the skies

“ With grief effeminate and fruitless cries ; 140

“ Had life been dearer than her country's call,

“ Judith had seen Bethulia's levell'd wall.

139 *Had Judith, &c.*] Clement having got as far as St Cloud, some persons who mistrusted him, watched him during the night ; they found him sleeping very soundly, with his Breviary near him, and opened at the article of Judith.

- " These exploits copy, these oblations bring,
 " Derive thy currents from that sacred spring.
 " I see thee blush ; —go, fly at my command, 145
 " Let royal blood now consecrate thy hand :
 " Set wretched Paris from her tyrant free,
 " Revenging Rome, the universe, and me.
 " Go, murder Valois, as he murder'd Guise,
 " Nor deem it faulty in religion's eyes : 150
 " Who guards the church, and vindicates her laws,
 " Is bravely acting in fair virtue's cause :
 " When God commands, then every deed is good,
 " Attend his mandates, and prepare for blood.
 " Thrice happy, could'st thou join the tyrant's
 death 155
 " To Bourbon's fall, and gain a nobler wreath !
 " Oh, could thy citizens ! — but fate denies
 " Thy hand the honours of that happy prize.
 " Yet, should thy fame with rays inferior shine,
 " Scorn not the gift, but finish heaven's design."

Thus spoke the phantom, and unsheath'd the
 blade, 161

By hatred once in Stygian waters laid,
 To Clement gave the sword, then took his flight
 Downward to hell, and sunk in endless night,

The

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 103

The young recluse, too easily receiv'd, 165
Himself th'Almighty's delegate believ'd ;
Embrac'd the gift with reverential love,
And begg'd assistance from the powers above :
The fiend no superstitious influence spar'd,
But all his soul for parricide prepar'd. 170

How apt is error to mislead mankind !
And reason's piercing eye how often blind !
The raging Clement, happy, and at ease,
Happy as those whom truth and virtue please ;
With down-cast looks, and virtue's clouded brow,
To heaven address'd the sacrilegious vow : 176
His front severe austerity reveal'd,
His hairy robe the fatal steel conceal'd.
He march'd—his friends the fairest flowers bestow'd,
And balmy odors to perfume the road : 180
These guides, in counsel, or in praises join'd
To add new fervor to his zealous mind ;
The holy calendar receiv'd his name,
Equal to saints in virtue, and in fame :
To him, as their deliverer they bow'd ; 185
He snufft the incense of the kneeling crowd.

176 *To heaven address'd, &c.*] He fasted, confessed his sins, and received the holy communion, before he went to assassinate the king.

Transports less warm, less moving raptures fir'd
The christian heroes, and their souls inspir'd,
When pious brethren were consign'd to death,
Firm and intrepid to their latest breath ; 190
They kiss'd each footstep, thought each torture
gain,
And wish'd to feel the agonizing pain.
Fanatics thus religion's ensigns bear,
Like worthies triumph, and like saints appear ;
The same desire the good, and impious draws, 195
Unnumber'd martyrs fall in errors cause.

Mayenne's keen eye beheld the future blow,
And more was known, than what he seem'd to know:
Intending wisely, when the blood was spilt,
To reap the profits, but avoid the guilt. 200
Sedition's sons were left to guide the whole,
And steel with rage the impious zealot's soul :
To Paris' gates they lead the traitor on ;
While the Sixteen with fond impatience run
To arts infernal, and devoutly pray 205
That heaven its secret counsels would display.
This science once distinguish'd Catherine's reign,
Tho' always criminal, and often vain.
The servile people, that for ever love
Each courtly vice, and what the great approve, 210

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 105

Fond of whate'er is marvellous, or new,
The same impieties with zeal pursue.

When night's dark shades conceal'd the bands
impure,

Silence conducts them to a vault obscure :

By the pale torch, which faintly pierc'd the gloom,
They raise an altar on the mouldering tomb. 216

There both the royal images appear,

Alike the objects of their rage, and fear :

There to almighty power their vows are paid,

And hellish demons summon'd to their aid. 220

High on the walls, a hundred lances stood,

Their points were plung'd in vases fill'd with blood.

Their priest was one of that unhappy race

Proscrib'd on earth, and sentenc'd to disgrace :

Slaves long inur'd to superstition's lore, 225

Whose crimes, and sorrows spread from shore to
shore.

The Leaguers next the sacrifice begin

With horrid cries, and bacchanalian din :

Now bathe their arms within the crimson tide ;

Now on the altar strike at Valois' side : 230

217. *Royal images, &c.*] Some of the priests belonging to the League had made little images of wax, that represented Henry III. and the king of Navarre.

Now with more rage, the terror to complete,
 See Henry's image trod beneath their feet :
 Death, as they thought, would aid the impious blow,
 And send the heroes to the shades below.

The Hebrew tried by blasphemy to move 235
 The depths beneath, and all the powers above ;
 Invok'd the spirits that in ether dwell,
 Swift lightnings, thunders, and the flames of hell :
 Endor's fam'd priestess erst such offerings made,
 And rais'd by dire enchantments Samuel's shade.
 Thus in Samaria once 'gainst Judah hung 241
 The lying accents on the prophet's tongue ;
 And thus inflexibly Ateius rose
 The high designs of Crassus to oppose.

The League's mad rulers waited to receive 245
 To charms, and spells what answer heaven would
 give ;
 Convinc'd that vows, thus offer'd, wing their way
 To the pure regions of eternal day :

243. *Ateius.*] A tribune of the people, who not being able to hinder Crassus from going on the expedition against the Parthians, fixed a pan of burning coals on the gate through which he went out, and throwing certain herbs into it, cursed the expedition, invoking the infernal deities.

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 107

Heaven heard the magic sounds, which only drew
From thence the vengeance to their errors due. 250

For them were stopt the laws which nature gave,
And plaintive murmurs fill'd the silent cave :

Successive lightnings in the depth of night
Flash'd all around, and darted horrid light.

Great Henry shone amidst the glittering gleams,
Encircl'd round with glory's golden beams : 256

High on the car of triumph as he rode,
Grace on his brow the laurel wreath bestow'd,

The royal sceptre glittered in his hand,
Emblem of power, and ensign of command : 260

Loud rolling thunders gave the fatal sign,
And opening earth receiv'd the flaming shrine :

The priest, and Leaguers shudder'd at the sight,
And veil'd their crimes beneath the shades of night.

The rolling thunders, and the fiery blaze 265

Declar'd that God had number'd Valois' days :

Grim death rejoic'd ; and, such th'almighty's will,

Crimes were allow'd his sentence to fulfil.

Now Clement to the royal tent drew near,

And begg'd admission undismay'd by fear : 270

For heaven, he said, had sent him to bestow

Reviving honours on the monarch's brow ;

And secrets to disclose, which might appear
 Worthy reception from his sovereign's ear.
 All mark his looks, and many a question ask, 275
 Least his attire some bad design should mask :
 He undisturb'd, with calm, and simple air
 Returns them answers plausible, and fair :
 Each accent seems from innocence to spring.
 The guards attend, and lead him to their king. 280

Calm as before, he bent the suppliant knee ;
 Unruffled, and unaw'd by majesty :
 Mark'd where to strike, and thus, by falsehood's
 aid,
 With treacherous lies his feign'd addresses paid.

“ Pardon, dread sovereign, him who trembling
 brings 285

“ Submissive praises to the king of kings :
 “ O let me thank kind heaven, whose gracious aid
 “ Has shew'd down blessings on thy sacred head.
 “ Potier the good, and Villerois the sage
 “ Have faithful prov'd in this rebellious age : 290
 “ Harlay the great, whose brave, intrepid zeal
 “ Was ever active in the public weal,
 “ Immur'd in prison, still thy cause defends,
 “ Confounds the League, and animates thy friends.

“ That

" That mighty Being, whose all piercing eyes 295
 " Defeat the counsels of the great, and wise :
 " Whose will no human knowledge can withstand,
 " Whose works are finish'd by the weakest hand :
 " To Harlay guided thy devoted slave,
 " That loyal subject ever good, and brave. 300
 " His sage advice, and sentiments refin'd.
 " Diffus'd a radiance o'er my clouded mind :
 " To bring these lines with eagerness I flew,
 " By Harlay counsell'd, and to Valois true."

The king receiv'd the letters with surprize, 305
 And tears of holy rapture fill'd his eyes :
 Oh when, he cried, shall Valois' hand supply
 Rewards proportion'd to thy loyalty ?
 Thus spoke the monarch with affection warm,
 Love undissembled, and extended arm : 310
 Each motion well the monstrous traitor eyed,
 And fiercely plung'd the dagger in his side.
 Soon as they saw the crimson torrents flow,
 A thousand hands reveng'd the fatal blow :
 The zealot wish'd not for a happier time, 315
 But stood unmov'd, and triumph'd in his crime ;
 Through opening skies he saw the heavenly dome,
 And endless glories in the world to come ;

The

The wreath of martyrdom from God requires,
 And greets those wounds by which himself expires.
 Oh dread illusion terrible, and blind! 321

Worthy the hate, and pity of mankind :
 Infectious preachers more deserv'd the blame,
 From whom the madness, and the poison came.

The hour arriv'd when Valois' darken'd fight
 Faintly beheld the parting, glimmering light : 326
 Surrounding slaves with many a falling tear
 Express'd their griefs dissembled, or sincere :
 For some there were, whose sorrows soon expir'd,
 With pleasing hopes of future greatness fir'd : 330
 Others, whose safety with the king was fled,
 Themselves lamented, not the royal dead.

Amidst the various sounds of plaintive cries
 Tears unaffected flow'd from Henry's eyes.
 Thy foe, great Bourbon, fell ; but souls like thine
 In such dread moments every thought resign, 346
 Save those which friendship, and compassion claim :
 Self-love destroys not pure celestial flame :
 The generous chief forgot his high renown,
 Tho' to himself devolv'd the regal crown. 340
 To raise his eyes the dying monarch strove,
 And clasp'd his hand with tenderness, and love.

“ Bourbon,

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. III

“ Bourbon, he cried, thy generous tears refrain,
“ Let others weep whose conduct I disdain :
“ Fly thou to vengeance, spread the dire alarm, 345
“ Go reign, and triumph with victorious arm :
“ I leave thee struggling on the stormy coast
“ Where shipwreck'd Valois was for ever lost.
“ My throne is thine, 'tis Bourbon's to command
“ These realms so long defended by thy hand: 350
“ Eternal thunders threaten Gallia's kings,
“ Then fear the power from whom thy glory
 springs:
“ By thee, from impious tenets undeceiv'd,
“ Be all the honours of God's shrine reviv'd. 354
“ Farewell, brave prince, and reign by all ador'd,
“ Guarded by heaven from each assassin's sword.
“ Thou know'st the League, the blow begins
 with me,
“ Nor stays its fury, but would end in thee.
“ In future days perchance some barbarous hand,
“ Obedient slave to faction's dread command, 360
“ Some arm—but oh ! ye Guardian angels, spare
“ Virtues so pure, so exquisite, and rare.
“ Permit”——no more he said ; departing breath
Consign'd the monarch to the arms of death.

363 *No more he said.*] Henry III. died of his wound the 3d of August at two o'clock in the morning at St. Cloud.

Now

Now was all Paris fill'd with joyful cries, 365
And odious songs of triumph rent the skies ;
The fanes are open'd wide at Valois' death,
And every Leaguer wears the flowery wreath :
All labour ends while faction blith, and gay,
To mirth, and feasting consecrates the day. 370
Bourbon appear'd the object of their sport,
And glorious valour seem'd his sole support.
Say, could he rise, and e'er resist again
The strengthen'd League, the angry church, and
Spain :

The Roman thunders with such fury hurl'd, 375
And the bright treasures of the western world !

Some warlike few, who little understood
What most contributes to the public good,
Affecting scruples foolish, and refin'd,
Calvin's defence already had resign'd : 380
Redoubled ardour in the royal cause
The rest inflam'd, and rul'd by other laws.
These generous soldiers, well approv'd in war,
Who long had rode in triumph's radiant car,
To Bourbon give unsettled Gallia's throne, 385
And all proclaim him worthy of the crown.
Those valiant knights, the Givris, and Daumonts,
The Montmorencis, Sancis, and Crillons,
Swear

Swear to remain inviolable friends,
And guard his person to earth's utmost ends: 390
Resolv'd their God, their sovereign to obey,
They boldly march where honour points the way.

"From you, cried Bourbon, fam'd in hardy
fight,

"My friends, I claim hereditary right:

"No peers have authorized our high command,

"No holy oil, nor consecrating hand. 396

"All due allegiance, in the days of yore,

"Your brave forefathers on their bucklers swore;

"To victory's laurell'd field their hands confin'd,

"And thence sent forth the monarchs of man-
kind." 400

Thus spoke the chief, and, marching first, prepar'd
By martial deeds to merit his reward.

V. THE MIRACLES

to certain objects, and
and his power in curing diseases.
And God, who is the author of all
miracles, has made it his will that

those who are called to this office should
be able to perform them.

And, finally, we have seen that the
miracles of the apostles were not
performed by their own power, but by the
power of God.

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THE

HENRIADE.

CANTO the SIXTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

*After the death of Henry III. the Leaguers assemble in
Paris to elect a king. In the midst of their debates
Henry IV. storms the city. The assembly is dismissed.
The members that composed it repair to the ramparts.
Description of the ensuing battle. The appearance of
St. Lewis to Henry IV.*

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the SIXTH.

IN France an ancient custom we retain,
When death resistless ends the monarch's reign,
When destiny cuts short the smooth descent,
And all the royal pedigree is spent,
The people to their former rights restor'd, 5
May change the laws, or chuse their future lord.
The states in counsel represent the whole,
Elect the king, and limit his controul;
Thus our renown'd forefathers did ordain
That Capet should succeed to Charlemagne. 10

The League with vain presumption arrogates
This right, and hastens to convene the states.
They thought the murder of the king bestow'd
That power perhaps on those who shed his blood,
And

And that the semblance of a throne would shroud
 Their dark designs, and captivate the crowd, 16
 Would help their jarring counsels to unite
 And give their foul pretence an air of right ;
 That from what source foe'er his claim may spring,
 Just or unjust, a king is still a king, 20
 And worthy or unworthy of the sway,
 The French must have a monarch to obey.

Swift to the Louvre with imperious air
 And fierce demeanour the proud chiefs repair ;
 Thither whom Spain ambassador had sent, 25
 And Rome, with many a priestly bigot went,
 To speed th'election with tumultuous haste,
 An insult on the kings of ages past,
 And in the splendor of their train's expence,
 Was seen the child of public indigence. 30
 No princely potentate or high-born peer
 Sprung from our old nobility, was there,
 Their grandeur now a shadowy form alone,
 Though lawgivers and kinsmen of the throne.
 No sage assertors of the public claim 35
 Strenuous and hardy, from the commons came,
 No lilies as of old the court array'd,
 But foreign foppery and strange parade :

There

Canto VI. THE HENRIADE. 119

There on his seat the Nuncio swell'd with pride,
And high-enthron'd, sat Mayenne by his side ; 40
Beneath the canopy with broidery grac'd,
Oh dire indignity ! these lines were trac'd.

" Kings of the earth, and judges of mankind,
" Who deaf to mercy, by no laws confin'd,
" Lay nature waste beneath your fierce domain, 45
" Let Valois' fate instruct you how to reign."

Forthwith contentious rage with jarring sound,
And clamorous strife discordant echo round.

Slave to the smiles of Rome, obsequious here
A venal flatterer soothes the legate's ear ; 50

'Tis time, he cries, the lily should bow down
Her head, obedient to the triple crown,
That Paris should that bloody court obey,
That direful monument of monkish sway,
Receiv'd, but hated by Iberia's court, 55

Religion's shame, tho' deem'd her firm support ;
Which, wrapt in flames the bigot world adores,
Whose sacred steel the breasts of mortals gores :
As tho' we liv'd in times that put their trust,
In Gods vindictive, ruthlès and unjust, 60

54. The dukes of Guise wanted to establish the inquisition in France;

When

When hypocritic priests with vengeance fir'd,
The sacrifice of human blood requir'd.

Some for Iberian gold betray the staté,
And sell it to the Spaniard whom they hate.
But mightier than the rest, their power was shown,
Whose voices destin'd Mayenne to the throne : 66
The splendor of a crown was wanting yet,
To make the fullness of his fame complete ;
To that bright goal his daring wish he sends,
Nor heeds the danger that on kings attends. 70

Then Potier rose ; plain, nervous, and untaught
His eloquence, the language of his thought.
No blemish of the times had touch'd the sage,
Rever'd for virtue in a vicious age ; 74
Oft had he check'd, with courage uncontroll'd,
The tide of faction headlong as it roll'd,
Asserted hardily the laws he lov'd,
Nor ever fear'd reproof, or was reprov'd.
He rais'd his voice ; struck silent at the sound 79
The croud was hush'd, and listening gather'd round.

71. Potier President of the Parliament, of which mention is made in the fourth and fifth canto. He publicly asked permission of the duke of Mayenne to retire to Henry IV. "I shall regard you all my life, says he to the duke, as my benefactor ; but I cannot look upon you as my master."

So when at sea the winds have ceas'd to roar,
 And the loud sailor's cries are heard no more,
 No sound survives, but of the dashing prow
 That nimbly cleaves the yielding waves below.
 Such Potier seem'd ; engaging was his look, 85
 Ev'n rude Confusion listen'd while he spoke.

" Mayenne, I find, has gain'd the general voice,
 " And though I praise not, can excuse your choice ;
 " His virtues I esteem not less than you,
 " And were I free to chuse, might chuse him too :
 " But if the laws ambitious he pervert, 91
 " His claim of empire cancels his desert."

While thus he spoke the chief he entering spied,
 With all the ornaments of kingly pride.

" Prince ! he pursued, and spoke it boldly forth,
 " I dare oppose you, for I know your worth ; 96
 " Dare step between your merit and the throne,
 " Warm in the cause of France, and in our own.
 " Vain your election were, your right unsound, 99
 " While yet in France a Bourbon may be found ;
 " Know, you are station'd near the throne by fate,
 " Not to usurp it, but protect the state.
 " His ashes sprinkled with a monarch's gore,
 " The shade of injured Guise can ask no more ;

G

" Point

"Point not your vengeance then at Henry's
head,

"Nor charge him with the blood he never shed.

"Heaven's influence on you both too largely flows,

"And 'tis your rival virtue makes you foes.

"But hark! the clamour of the common herd

"Ascends the skies, and heretic's the word; 110

"And see the priesthood rang'd in dark array,

"To deeds of blood insatiate urge their way!

"Ye friends, what law, what frenzy of your own

"Can cancel your allegiance to the throne?

"Comes he, this Henry, savage and unjust, 115

"Comes he to lay your altars in the dust?

"No! to those shrines in search of truth he flies,

"And loves the sacred laws yourselves despise;

"Virtue alone, whatever form she wears,

"Whatever sect she graces, he reveres; 120

"Nor like yourselves, weak, arrogant and blind

"Dares do the work of God, and judge mankind

"More righteous, and more christian far than you

"He comes to rule, but to forgive you too.

"And shall you judge your master, and shall he

"The friend of freedom, not himself be free? 125

"Not such, alas! nor sullied with your crimes,

"Were the true christian race of elder times;

The

" They, tho' all heathen errors they abhor'd,
 " Serv'd without murmuring their heathen lord,
 " The doom of death without a groan obey'd, 131
 " And dying for their fell tormentors pray'd :
 " Such are the christians whom true faith assures,
 " They died to serve their kings, you murder yours.
 " God, whom you jealous and vindictive call,
 " If he lov'd vengeance, would destroy you all."

He clos'd his bold harrangue, confusion scar'd
 Their conscious souls, none answer'd him nor dar'd ;
 In vain they would have shaken from their hearts,
 The dread which truth to guiltiness imparts : 140
 Fear and resentment in their bosoms rise ;
 When lo ! a thousand voices pierce the skies,
 Confus'd the citizens to arms they call,
 " To arms, or ruin on your heads will fall."

Dark clouds of dust in floating volumes rise 145
 Wide o'er the champaign, and obscure the skies ;
 The clarion and the drum with horrid sound,
 Dread harbingers of slaughter, echo round.
 So from his gloomy chambers in the north,
 When the fierce spirit of the storm breaks forth,
 His dusky pinions shroud the noon-day light, 151
 And thunder and sharp winds attend his flight.

'Twas Henry's host came shouting from afar,
 Disdaining ease, and eager for the war;
 O'er the wide plain they stretch'd their bright
 array,

And to the ramparts urged their furious way. 156

These hours the chief vouchsaf'd not to con-
 sume

In empty rites perform'd at Valois' tomb,
 Unprofitable tribute! fondly paid
 By the proud living to th'unconscious dead! 160
 No lofty dome, or monumental pile,
 On the waste shore he rais'd with fruitless toil,
 Vain arts! to rescue the departed great,
 From the rough tooth of time and rage of fate;
 A nobler meed on Valois' shade below, 165
 And worthier gifts he hasten'd to bestow,
 T'avenge his murder, make rebellion cease,
 And rule the subjugated land in peace.

The din of battle gathering at their gates,
 Dissolv'd their counsel, and dispers'd the states. 170
 Swift from the walls to view th'advancing host
 The general flew, the soldier to his post;
 With shouts th'approaching hero they incense,
 And all is ripe for onset and defence.

Paris was different in those times of rage, 175
 From Paris seen in this more happy age.
 Begirt with massy walls, and unexpos'd,
 An hundred forts the narrower town enclos'd;
 The suburbs now defenceless and unbarr'd,
 The gentle hand of peace their only guard, 180
 Adorn'd with all the pomp that wealth supplies,
 Proud spires and palaces that pierce the skies,
 Were then rude hamlets girt with ramparts round,
 From Paris severed by a fofs profound.
 From the brighteast the chief his march began, 185
 And hasty Death came foremost in his van.
 Wing'd with red flames impetuous from on high
 And from below, the showery bullets fly,
 The rattling storm resistless thickens round, 189
 And tumbles towers and bastions to the ground;
 Nor can the troops its direful rage sustain,
 They fall, their scatter'd limbs bestrew the plain.

In earlier times, unaided and untaught,
 His fate by simpler means the soldier wrought;
 Strength against strength oppos'd the contest tried,
 And on their swords the combatants relied; 196
 More cruel wars their children learn'd to wage,
 Nor less than lightning satisfied their rage.

Then first was heard the thunder-bearing bomb,
 Imprison'd mischief struggling in its womb, 200
 Swift on the destin'd mark the ponderous shell
 Came down, and spread destruction where it fell.

Next, dire improvement on the barbarous trade,
 In hollow vaults the secret mine was laid ;
 In vain the warrior, trusting in his might, 205
 Speeds his bold march, and seeks the promis'd fight,
 A sudden blast divides the yawning earth,
 And the black vapour kindles into birth,
 Smote by strange thunder sinks the astonish'd host,
 Deep in the dark abyss for ever lost. 210
 These dangers Bourbon unappall'd defies,
 Impatient for the strife, a throne the prize :
 Where'er his hardy bands the hero leads,
 'Tis hell beneath, and tempest o'er their heads,
 His glorious steps undaunted they pursue, 215
 Fir'd by his deeds still brightening in their view.

Grave in the midst the valiant Mornay went,
 Though slow his march, intrepid his intent ;
 Rage he alike disdain'd and slavish dread, 219
 Nor heard the thunders bursting round his head ;

199 *The thunder-bearing bomb.*] Bombs were first used in the wars of Flanders under Philip II. by an Italian engineer. We owe almost all the arts to the Italians.

War to his stoic eye appears design'd
 By heaven, to punish sinful human kind ;
 Ev'n for the wonders of his sword he griev'd,
 And loath'd it for the glories it atchiev'd. 224

Now pour'd their legions down the dreadful way,
 Where smear'd with blood the sloping glacis lay ;
 More fierce as more in danger, with the slain
 They choke the fofs, and lift it to the plain,
 They march on corfes that in heaps were plac'd,
 And hurry to the breach in eager hafte. 230
 Waving his bloody faulchion, Henry led
 The way, and enter'd furious at their head.
 Already fixt by his victorious hand
 High on the walls his glittering banners ftand : 234
 Awe-ftuck the Leaguers feem'd, as they implor'd
 The conqueror's mercy, and confefs'd their lord ;
 Mayenne recalls them to their guilty part,
 And drives the dawning grace from ev'ry heart ;
 The clofe battalions prefs on either hand
 That king, whose looks before they fear'd to ftand.
 Fierce on the battlements, and bath'd in blood 241
 Of thoufands slain, the fury Discord flood ;
 There beft her horrid mandates they obey,
 And join'd in clofer fight more furely flay.

Sudden the deep-mouth'd engines cease to roar,
 And the loud thunder of the war is o'er: 246
 At once an universal silence round,
 With awful pause, succeeds the deafening sound;
 Now thro' his foes the soldier cleaves his way,
 And on the sword alone depends the day; 250
 Alternate the contending leaders boast
 The bloody ramparts won, and yield them lost:
 Still victory the doubtful balance sway'd,
 And join'd in air the mingling banners play'd,
 'Till oft triumphant, and as oft subdued, 255
 Fled the pale League, and Henry swift pursued.
 'Tis thus the restless billows wash the shore,
 By turns o'erwhelm it, and by turns restore.

Then most in that tremendous hour was shown,
 The might of Bourbon's rival, and his own; 260
 'Twas then each hero's warlike soul was prov'd,
 That in the shock of charging hosts unmov'd,
 Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
 Rang'd the dread scene and rul'd the doubtful war.

Mean while, renown'd for many martial deeds,
 A gallant English band brave Essex leads, 266
 In Gallia's cause with wonder they advance,
 And scarcely can believe they fight for France.

On the same ramparts where the conquer'd Seine,
 Saw in old time their great forefathers reign, 270
 For England's sake they wage the mortal strife,
 Proud to enhance her fame, and prodigal of life.
 Impetuous Effex first the breach ascends,
 Where fierce D'Aumale the crowded pass defends,
 To fight, like fabled demi-gods, they came, 275
 Their age, their ardour, and their force the same;
 French, English, Lorrenese in combat close,
 And in one stream the mingled slaughter flows.

Oh thou! the genius of that fatal day,
 Soul of the strife, destroying angel, say, 280
 Whose was the triumph then, which hero's host
 Thyself assisted, and heaven favour'd most.
 Long time the chiefs with rival glory crown'd,
 Dealt equal slaughter thro' the legions round;
 At length, by factious rage in vain assail'd, 285
 The righteous cause and Henry's arms prevail'd;
 Worn with disastrous toil and long fatigue,
 Exhausted, hopeless, fled the vanquish'd League.
 As on Pyrene's ever-clouded brow,
 When swelling torrents threat the vale below, 290
 A while with solid banks and lofty mounds,
 They stay the foaming deluge in its bounds;

130 THE HENRIADE. Canto VI.

But soon, the barrier broke, the rushing tide
 Roars unresisted down the mountain' side,
 Unroots the forest oaks, and bears away, 295
 Flocks, folds and herds, an undistinguish'd prey:
 So from the smoaking walls with matchless force
 Victorious Bourbon urged his rapid course,
 Such havock where the royal warrior pass'd,
 Deform'd the ranks and laid the battle waste. 300
 At length the portals, by Mayenne's command,
 Flung wide, receiv'd the desolated band.
 The victor host around the suburbs fly
 Incens'd, and hurl the blazing torch on high,
 Their temperate valour kindles into rage, 305
 And spoil and plunder are the war they wage.
 Henry perceiv'd it not; with eager flight
 He chased the foe, dispers'd before his sight;
 Spurr'd by his courage, with success elate
 And ardent joy, he reach'd the hostile gate, 310
 Thence on his scatter'd powers aloud he calls,
 "Haste, fly my friends, and scale the haughty
 walls."

When sudden in a rolling cloud enshrin'd,
 A beauteous form came floating on the wind,
 With gracious mien and awful to the view, 315
 Tow'rd's Henry the descending vision flew,
 His

His brow was with immortal splendor drest,
And horror mixt with love his eyes express'd.

"Hold, hapless conqueror of your native land !

"The phantom cried, and stay your vengeful
hand ; 320

"This fair dominion you with war deface,

"Is yours of old, the birthright of your race ;

"These lives you seek, are vassals of your throne,

"This wealth you give to plunder, is your own ;

"Spare your own heritage, nor seek to reign 325

"A solitary monarch o'er the slain."

Amaz'd the soldier heard the solemn sound,

And dropt his spoils, and prostrate kiss'd the ground.

Then Henry, rage still boiling in his breast,

Like seas hoarse-murmuring while they sink to
rest ; 330

"Say bright inhabitant of heaven, what means

"Your hallow'd form amidst these horrid scenes?"

Mild as the breeze, at summer's evening tide

Serene, the visionary shape replied.

"Behold the fainted king whom France adores,

"Protector of the Bourbon race, and yours, 336

"That Louis, who like you once urged the fight,

"Whose shrine you heed not, and whose faith you
flight ;

“ Know, when the destin’d days their course have
run, 339

“ Heaven shall itself conduct you to the throne ;

“ Thine is the vict’ry, but that great reward,

“ Is for thy mercy, not thy might, prepar’d.”

He spoke : the listening chief with rapture hears,
And down his cheek fast flow the joyful tears ;
Peace sooth’d his tranquil heart, he dropt his sword,
And on his knees devout the shade ador’d. 346

Then twice around his neck his arms he flung,
And thrice deceiv’d on vain embraces hung ;
Light as an empty dream at break of day,
Or as a blast of wind, he rush’d away. 350

Mean while, in haste to guard th’invested town,
The swarming multitudes the ramparts crown,
Thick from above a fiery flood they pour,
And at the monarch aim the fatal shower,
But heaven’s bright influence, round his temples
shed, 355

Diverts the storm, and guards his sacred head.

’Twas then he saw, protected as he stood,

What thanks to his paternal saint he ow’d ;

Tow’rds Paris his sad eye in sorrow thrown,

“ Ye French ! he cried, and thou ill-fated town,

“ Ye

Canto VI. THE HENRIADE. 133

“ Ye citizens, a blind deluded herd, 361

“ How long will you withstand your lawful lord !’

Nor more; but as the star that brings the day,

At eve declining in his western way,

More mildly shoots his horizontal fires, 365

And seems an ampler globe as he retires ;

Thus did the chief from Paris walls depart,

God and the fainted king inspir’d his heart.

Vincennes he sought, where Lewis whilom spoke

His righteous laws, beneath an aged oak. 370

Vincennes, alas ! no more a calm retreat,

How art thou chang’d, thou once delightful feat !

Thy rural charms, thy peaceful smiles are fled,

And blank despair possesses thee instead.

’Tis there the great, their hapless labours done,

And all the short liv’d race of glory run, 376

The fickle changes of their various lot

Conclude, and die neglected and forgot.

Now night o’er heaven pursued her dusky way,

And hid in shades the horrors of the day.

374. It is well known how many illustrious prisoners the cardinals Richlieu and Mazarin confined at Vincennes.

...you will find that the Lutherans are not only the most numerous but also the most influential of the Protestant churches in this country.

...the Lutherans are the most numerous of the Protestant churches in this country.

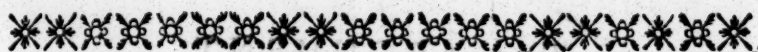
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THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the SEVENTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

Henry IV. transported in a vision by St. Lewis to heaven, and the infernal regions. He arrives at the palace of the Destinies; where he has an opportunity of seeing his posterity, and the great men hereafter to be produced in France.

T H E
H E N R I A D E.

C A N T O the S E V E N T H.

A L M I G H T Y God, to soften human woes,
And bleſs the life his providence beſtows,
Among us plac'd two beings all benign,
Earth feels with joy their influence divine;
Kind Hope and balmy Sleep, a heavenly pair, 5
Bring ſolace to the poor, and lighten care.
Soft Sleep, when man's weak frame with toils
oppreſt,
Sinks vanquiſh'd, and demands its needful reſt,
Our feeble nature's painful waſte repairs
With ſweet oblivion of corroding cares: 10
Hope, oft deceitful, but for ever kind,
Diffuſes warmth and tranſport through the mind.
From her the few, whom heaven approves, may learn
The pleaſing iſſue of each high concern:
Pure

Pure as her author in the realms above 15
To them she brings the tidings of his love.

Immortal Lewis bid the faithful pair
Expand their wings, and soften Henry's care.
Still Sleep repairs to Vincenne's shady ground ;
The winds subside, and silence reigns around. 20
Hope's blooming offspring, happy dreams, succeed,
And give the pleasing, though ideal meed.
The verdant olive, and the laurel bough,
Entwin'd with poppies, grace the hero's brow.

On Bourbon's temples Lewis plac'd the crown,
Whose radiant honours once adorn'd his own. 26

" Go, reign, he cried, and triumph o'er thy foes ;

" No other hope the race of Lewis knows.

" Yet think diviner presents to receive,

" Far more, my son, than royalty I give. 30

" What boots renown in arms, should heaven
with-hold.

" Her light more precious than the purest gold ?

" These worldly honours are a barren good ;

" Rewards uncertain on the brave bestow'd :

" A transient greatness, and a fading wreath 35

" Blasted by troubles, and destroy'd by death.

" Empire more durable, for thee design'd,

" I come to show thee, and inform thy mind.

" Attend

"Attend my steps through paths thou ne'er hast
trod,

"And fly to meet the bosom of thy God." 40

Thus spoke the saint; they mount the car of light,
And swiftly traverse the ethereal height.

Thus midnight lightnings flash, while thunders
roll,

And cleave the ambient air from pole to pole.

Thus rose Elijah on the fiery cloud; 45

The radiant ether with effulgence glow'd :

To purer worlds, array'd in glories bright,

The prophet fled, and vanish'd from the sight.

Amid those orbs which move by certain laws
Known to each sage whom love of science draws,
The sun revolving round his axle turns, 51

Shines undiminish'd, and for ever burns,

Thence spring those golden torrents, which bestow
All vital warmth, and vigor as they flow :

From thence the welcome day, and year proceeds ;

Through various worlds his genial influence speeds

The rolling planets beam with borrowed rays,

And all around reflect the solar blaze ;

Attract each other, and each other shun :

And end their courses where they first begun. 60

Far

Far in the void unnumber'd worlds arise,
 And suns unnumber'd light the azure skies.
 Far beyond all the God of heaven resides,
 Marks every orbit, every motion guides.

Thither the hero, and the saint repair ; 65
 Myriads of spirits are created there,
 Which amply people all the globe, and fill
 The human body ; such th' Almighty's will.
 There, with immortal spirits at his feet,
 The Judge incorruptible holds his seat. 70
 The God eternal, in all climes ador'd
 By different names, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.
 Before his throne our plaintive sorrows rise ;
 Our errors he beholds with pitying eyes :
 Those senseless portraits, figur'd by mankind, 75
 To paint his image, and omniscient mind.
 All who on earth inhale the living breath,
 Attend his summons through the gates of death.
 The eastern sage, with holy wisdom fraught,
 The sons of science, whom Confucius taught. 80
 Those who succeed in Zoroaster's cause,
 And blindly yield submission to his laws :

81. *Zoroaster*] In Persia the Guebres have a religion peculiar to themselves, which they pretend to be that founded by Zoroaster ; it appears less ridiculous than other religions of human origin, since they worship the sun as an image of the Creator.
 The

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 141

The pale inhabitants of Zembla's coast,
That dreary region of eternal frost;
Canadia's sons, with fatal error blind, 85
Where truth illumines not the savage mind.
The gazing Dervis looks in vain around,
At God's right hand no prophet to be found.
The Bonze, with gloomy, penitential brow,
Derives no comfort from his rigid vow. 90

At once enlightned, all the dead await
To hear their sentence, and approaching fate.
That mighty Being, whose extended view,
And boundless knowledge looks all nature through,
The past, the present, and the future times, 95
Rewards their love, or punishes their crimes.
The prince approach'd not, in those realms of light,
The throne invisible to human sight;
Whence issues forth the terrible decree
Which man presumes too fondly to foresee. 100

Is God, said Henry to himself, unjust,
On whom the world's created beings trust?
Will the Almighty not vouchsafe to save
For want of knowledge which he never gave?
Expect religion where it never shone; 105
And judge the universe by laws unknown?
His

His hand created all, and all will find
 That heaven's high King is merciful, and kind.
 His voice informs the whole, and every part ;
 Fair nature's laws are stamp'd on every heart. 110
 Nature, the same through each inferior clime,
 Pure, and unspotted to the end of time,
 By this the pagan's sentence will proceed,
 And pagan virtue is religion's deed.

While thus, with reason narrow, and confin'd,
 On truths mysterious he employ'd his mind, 116
 A solemn, awful voice was heard around ;
 All heaven, all nature shudder'd at the sound.
 Such were the thunders, which from Sinai's brow,
 Diffus'd a horror through the plains below. 120
 Each seraph glow'd with adoration's fire,
 And silence reign'd through all the cherub choir.
 The rolling spheres the sacred accents caught,
 And truths divine to other planets taught.
Distrust thy mental powers, nor blindly stray 125
As pride, or feeble reason points the way,
The high invisible who rules above,
Escapes thy knowledge, but demands thy love.
His power, and justice punish, and controul
Each wilful error of the stubborn soul. 130

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 143

To pure devotion be thy heart consign'd,

Truth's radiant orb illumine all thy mind.

These were the sounds, when thro' the fields of light,

A rapid whirlwind from the ethereal height

Convey'd the prince to dark and dreary climes, 135

Like those where Chaos reign'd in elder times.

No solar influence, like its author mild,

Diffuses comfort through the savage wild,

Angels abhor the desolated waste,

Which life's fair, fruitful blossom never grac'd.

Confusion, death, each terror of despair, 141

Fix'd on his throne, presides a tyrant there.

O heavens! what shrieks of woe, what piteous cries,

What sulphureous smoaks, what horrid flames arise!

What fiends, cried Bourbon, to these climes

retreat! 145

What gulphs, what torrents burst beneath our feet!

See here! the faint return'd, the gates of hell,

Which justice form'd, where impious spirits dwell.

Come, view the dismal regions of distress;

These paths are always easy of access. 150

There squint-eyed Envy lay, whose poisonous breath

Consumes the verdure of each laurel wreath:

In night's impenetrable darkness bred,

She hates the living, but applauds the dead:

Her sparkling eyes, which shun the orb of day,
Perceiving Henry, Envy turn'd away. 156

Near her, self-loving, self admiring Pride,
And down-cast Weakness, ever pale, reside.
Weakness, which yields to each persuasive crime,
And crops the flower of virtue in its prime. 160

Ambition there with head-strong fury raves,
With thrones surrounded, sepulchres, and slaves.

Submissive, meek Hypocrisy was nigh,
Hell in her heart, but heaven was in her eye.

There Interest, father of all crimes, appear'd, 165
And blinded Zeal by Cruelty rever'd.

These wild, tyrannic rulers of mankind,
When Henry came, their savage air resign'd.

Their impious troop ne'er reach'd his purer soul,
Such virtue yields not to their mad controul. 170

Who comes, they cried, to break the peaceful rest
Of night eternal, and these shades molest?

Our hero view'd the subterraneous scene,
And slowly travell'd through the ranks obscene.

Lewis led on. — O heaven! is that the hand, 175
Which murder'd Valois at the League's command?

Is that the monster? yes, I know him well,
His arm still holds the parricidal steel.

While

Canto V. THE HENRIADE. 145

While barbarous priests proclaim the wretch divine,
And place his portrait on the hallow'd shrine, 180
Though Rome and faction celebrate his name,
To hymns and praises hell denies his claim.

Princes, and kings, the honour'd saint replied,
Meet in these realms the punishment of pride.
Behold those tyrants, once ador'd by all, 185
Whose height but serv'd to aggrandize their fall.
God pours his vengeance on the scepter'd crowd,
For vice committed, and for crimes allow'd.
Death, from on high commission'd to destroy,
Cut short the transport of each wayward joy. 190
No pomp of greatness could the victim save;
Their beams of glory set within the grave.
Now is no civil, sly deceiver near,
To whisper error in the sovereign's ear.
Once injur'd truth the sword of terror draws; 195
Displays each crime, and indicates her cause.
Behold yon heroes tremble at her nod,
Steem'd as tyrants in the eyes of God.

181. *Though Rome, &c.*] James Clement, the parricide, was
lised at Rome, in the very chair where the funeral oration of
Henry III. ought to have been pronounced. His portrait was
ced at Paris on the altar with the eucharist.

H

Now

Now on their heads descend those thunders dire,
 Form'd by themselves to set the world on fire. 200
 Close by their side, the weakest of mankind,
 Each listless, feeble monarch is reclin'd ;
 Whose indolence disgrac'd the subject land,
 Mere airy forms, mere nothings in command.
 Sinister counsellors on these await, 205
 Once their imperious ministers of state.
 Proud, avaritious, of immoral lives,
 Who sold what honours Mars, or Themis gives :
 Sold what our fathers purchas'd by their blood,
 And all that's precious to the great, and good. 210

Tell me, said Henry, O ye sons of ease,
 Must tender spirits dwell in climes like these ?
 Ye, who, on flowery couches, pass away
 The tranquil moments of life's useless day.
 Shall virtue's friends in fiery torments roll ? 215
 Whose faults have risen from expanse of soul.
 Shall one mistaken, momentary joy,
 Maturer Wisdom's plenteous fruits destroy ?
 This, cried the prince, the lot of human race ?
 Condemn'd for endless ages to distress ! 220
 If all mankind one common hell devours,
 Eternal tortures close our transient hours,

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 147

Who was not more in non-existence blest?
Who would not perish at his mother's breast?
Far happier man ! had God's creative hand 225
Form'd him less free, in innocence to stand :
Had God, thus awfully severe, bestow'd
The sole capacity of doing good.
Think not, the saint replied, the sinful crew
Bear for their failings punishments undue ; 230
Think not the great Creator of mankind
To these his works is cruel, or unkind :
Lord of all beings, he presides above
With mercy infinite, and boundless love :
Though mortals see the tyrant in their God, 235
Parental tenderness directs his rod.
Let not these horrid scenes thy soul alarm ;
Compassion checks the fury of his arm :
Nor endless punishments inflict on those
Whose faults from human imperfection rose : 240
Whose pleasures, follow'd by remorse, have been
The transient cause of momentary sin.
Such were his accents—to the realms of light
Both are convey'd with instantaneous flight.
Infernal darkness shuns those flowery plains 245
Where spotless innocence for ever reigns.

H 2

There,

There, in the floods of purest æther play
 The beams refulgent of eternal day :
 Each blooming scene seraphic joys bestow'd ;
 And Henry's soul with unknown raptures glow'd :
 No cares, nor passions there admittance find, 251
 But tranquil pleasure fills up all the mind :
 No cares solicit, and no passions move ;
 But all is govern'd by angelic love :
 Far other love, than that of wild desires, 255
 Which grosser sense, and luxury inspires ;
 The bright, the sacred flame on earth unknown,
 Which burns in heaven, and heavenly minds
 alone :
 Its chaste endearments all their hours employ,
 And endless wishes meet with endless joy. 260
 There dwell true heroes ; there each pious sage,
 And monarchs once the glory of their age.
 Thence Charlemagne, and Clovis turn their eyes
 On Gallia's empire from yon azure skies :
 On golden thrones for ever plac'd sublime, 265
 And clad in honours unimpair'd by time.
 There, fiercest foes the happy union prove
 Of pure affection, and a brother's love.

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 149

Lewis the wise, amid the royal band,
Tall as a cedar, issues his command : 270
Lewis, of France the glory, and the pride,
Who rul'd our realms with justice by his side.]
Oft would he pardon, oft relief supply ;
And wipe the falling tear from every eye.
D'Amboise is still commission'd to attend ; 275
His faithful minister, and warmest friend :
To him alone his Gallia's honour dear ;
To him alone her homage was sincere :
His gentler hands were sullied not with blood ;
His every wish was center'd in her good. 280

Oh spotless manners ! bright, and halcyon days !
Worthy eternal memory, and praise.
Then wholesome laws adorn'd, and bless'd the
state :

Subjects were happy, and the monarch great.
Return, ye halcyon days, with golden wing : 285
And equal blessings, equal honours bring.
Virtue, descend, another Lewis frame
As rich in merit, and as great in fame.

Farther remote, those worthy heroes stood,
Careless of life, and prodigal of blood, 290

Who died with transport for the public weal;
 Led on by duty, not enrag'd by zeal.
 Brave Montmorency, Tremouille, de Foix,
 Who fought their passage to those fields of joy.
 There Guesclin drinks of pleasure's purer springs:
 Guesclin, th'avenger, and the dread of kings. 296
 There too appear'd the Amazonian dame,
 The tottering throne's support, and England's
 shame.

These, cried the faint, who now possess the skies,
 Like thee with glory dazzled Europe's eyes. 300

293. *Montmorency.*] It would fill a volume, should we specify the services done to the state by this family.

Ib. Tremouille.] Among many great men of this name, Guy de la Tremouille is particularly aluded to. He was surnamed *the Valiant*; carried the royal standard; and refused the high constable's sword in the reign of Charles VI.

Ib. de Foix.] Gaston de Foix, duke of Nemours, and nephew to Lewis XII. He was slain at the famous battle of Ravenna; having received fourteen wounds, and defeated the enemy.

295. *Guesclin*] France owed her preservation to this great man, in the reign of Charles V. He conquered Castile, placed Henry de Transmere upon the throne of Peter the Cruel, and was constable of France, and Castile.

297. *Amazonian Dame.*] Joan of Arc, known by the name of the Maid of Orleans. She was born at the village of Domremy upon the Meuse; had been servant at an inn, and being superior to her sex in strength of body, and bravery of mind, she was employed by the count de Dunois to retrieve the affairs of Charles VII. taken prisoner in a sally at Compiègne in the year 1430, conducted to Rouen, tried as a sorceress in an ecclesiastical court, and burnt by the English, who ought to have honoured her for her courage.

Virtue

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 151

Virtue alone their simpler minds could move :
The church was nourish'd by their filial love.
Like me they honour'd truth's diviner name :
Our worship uniform, our church the same.
Say, why does Bourbon follow other laws, 305
Or why defend religion's weaker cause ?

Time, with incessant flight prepar'd to roam,
Quits, and revisits this terrific dome :
And pours with plenteous hand on all mankind
The good, and evil for each race design'd. 310
An altar high of massy iron bears
The fatal annals of succeeding years.

Where God's own hand has mark'd, nor mark'd in
vain,

Each transient pleasure, each severer pain.
There liberty, that haughty slave, is bound, 315
With chains invisible encircled round :
Fetters eternal there her power confine,
And make her subject to the will divine :
This suppliant turn that hidden chain supplies
Wisely conceal'd for ever from her eyes : 320
The fates appear her sentence to fulfil ;
Each action seems the product of free-will.

From thence, cried Lewis, on the human race
Descends the influence of heavenly grace :

Lanch'd from that sacred spot, her conquering dart
Shall one day touch, inflame, transfix thy heart.

Those precious moments God alone bestows ;

No mortal hastens, and no being knows. 328

But oh, how slowly comes that period on

When God shall love, and own thee for his son !

Too long shall weakness hide thy brighter rays ;

And lead thy steps thro' error's slippery ways.

Teach him, kind heaven, the happier, better road ;

Shorten the days which part him from his God.

But see what crowds in long succession pass 335
Through the vast region of unbounded space ?

These sacred mansions to thy view display

The unborn offspring of some future day :

All times, and places are for ever nigh,

All beings present to Jehovah's eye. 340

Here fate has mark'd their destin'd hour of birth,

Their rise, their grandeur, and their fall on earth ;

The various changes of each life to come,

Their vices, virtues, and their final doom.

Draw near, for heaven allows us to foresee 345

What kings, and heroes shall descend from thee.

Behold, among the first thy son advance !

Long shall his arm support the cause of France ;

The

The warlike leader shall his triumphs boast
 O'er Belgia's plains, and proud Iberia's coast. 350
 To deeds more noble shall his son aspire ;
 And wreaths more splendid first adorn his fire.

On beds of lilies, near a towering throne,
 Two radiant forms before our hero shone : 354
 Monarchs they seem'd, of high imperious pride,
 And Roman purple flow'd adown their side :
 A subject nation couch'd beneath their feet,
 And guards unnumber'd form'd the train complete.
 These, said the saint, are doom'd to endless fame ;
 In all things sovereigns, save the royal name : 360
 Richlieu, and Mazarin, design'd by fate
 Immortal ministers of Gallia's state :
 To them shall policy consign her aid ;
 And fortune raise them from the altar's shade.
 Rul'd by despotic power, shall France confess 365
 Great Richlieu's genius, Mazarin's address :
 One flies with art before the rising storm :
 One braves all danger in its fiercest form :

367. *One flies.*] Cardinal Mazarin was obliged to leave the kingdom in the year 1651 ; notwithstanding he had the entire government of the queen Regent. Cardinal Richlieu on the contrary always maintained his situation in spite of his enemies and the king, who was disgusted at his behaviour.

Both to the princes of our royal blood
 With hate relentless enemies avow'd : 370
 With high ambition, and with pride inspir'd,
 By all dislik'd and yet by all admir'd :
 Their artful schemes, and industry shall bring
 Plagues on their country, glory to their king.

O thou, great Colbert, whose enlighten'd mind
 Schemes less extensive for our good design'd ! 376
 No lustre equals, none excells thy own,
 Save that which gilds, and decorates the crown :
 Nurs'd by thy genius, heaven-born plenty reigns,
 And pours her treasures over Gallia's plains : 380
 Colbert by generous deeds to glory rose ;
 His only vengeance was to bless his foes.
 Thus were dispens'd the gifts of heavenly grace,
 By God's own confident on Israel's race : 384
 That race, whose blasphemy could ne'er remove,
 Or quench the beams of mercy and of love.

What troops of slaves before that monarch stand !
 What numbers tremble at his high command !

375. Colbert was detested by the people. That blind, and savage monster would have dug his body out of the ground ; but the approbation of men of sense, which at length prevailed, has rendered his name for ever dear, and respectable.

387. *That monarch.*] Lewis XIV.

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 155

No king did Gallia ever yet obey
With such profound submission to his sway. 390
Though less belov'd, more dreaded in her eyes,
Like thee he claims for glory's richest prize:
Firm in all danger, in success too warm
When fortune smiles, and conquest meets his arm:
Himself shall crush, superior to intrigue, 395
Full twenty nations join'd in powerful league:
Praise shall attend him to his latest breath,
Great in his life, but greater in his death.
Thrice happy age! when nature's lavish hand
With all her graces shall adorn the land: 400
Thrice happy age! when every art refin'd
Spreads her fair polish o'er the ruder mind:
The muse for ever our retreats shall love
More than the shades of Aganippe's grove:
From sculptur'd stone the seeming accent flows;
With animated tints the canvass glows. 406
What sons of science in that period rise,
Measure the universe, and read the skies!
The purer ray of philosophic light
Reveals all nature, and dispels the night: 410

407. *What sons of science.*] The academy of sciences; whose memoirs are esteemed through all Europe.

Presumptuous error from their view retreats ;
 Truth crowns their labours, and their joy completes.
 Thy accents too, sweet music, strike mine ear,
 Music, descended from the heavenly sphere.
 'Tis thine to sooth, to soften, and controul 415
 Each wayward passion of the ruffled soul.
 Unpolish'd Greece, and Italy have own'd
 The strong enchantments of thy magic sound :
 The subjects rul'd by Gallia's powerful king
 Shall bravely conquer, and as sweetly sing ; 420
 Shall join the poet's to the warrior's praise,
 And twine Bellona's with Apollo's bays.
 E'en now I see this second age of gold
 Produce a people of heroic mould :
 Here numerous armies skim before my sight ; 425
 There march the Bourbons eager for the fight.
 At once the master's terror, and support,
 Great Condé makes the flames of war his sport.

428. *Condé.*] Lewis de Bourbon, generally called the great Condé, and Henry viscount de Turenne, have been looked upon as the greatest generals of their time. They had both gained very important victories, and acquired glory even in their defeats. The prince of Condé's genius seemed, as it was said, more proper for a day of battle, and that of Mr. de Turenne for a whole campaign. It is certain at least, that Mr. de Turenne gained considerable advantages over the great Condé at Gien, Etampes, Paris, Arras, and the battle of Dunes. We shall not however attempt to determine which was the greatest man.

Turenne

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 157

Turenne more calmly meets the hostile power,
In arms his equal, and in wisdom more. 430

Assemblage rare! in Catinat are seen
The hero's talents, and the sage's mien.

Behold the chief whose arms our towers defend,
Vauban to virtue and to arts a friend.

England shall tell of Luxembourg's renown, 435
In war invincible, at court unknown.

431. *Catinat.*] The marshal de Catinat, born in 1637; he gained the battle of Staffarde, and Marseilles: and obeyed without reluctance or murmuring the marshal de Villerois, who sent him orders without consulting him. He resigned his command with the utmost composure; never complained of any person's treatment, asked nothing of the king, and died like a true philosopher at his country seat at St. Gratien. He never augmented or diminished his estate, and never for a moment acted unworthy his character as a man of temperance, and moderation.

434. *Vauban.*] The marshal de Vauban, born in 1633, the greatest engineer that ever lived. He repaired upon a new plan of his own no less than 300 old fortifications, and built 33. He conducted 53 sieges, and was present at 140 actions. He left behind him at his death 12 manuscript volumes full of designs for the good of the state; none of which has ever yet been executed. He was a member of the academy of sciences, and did more honour to it than any other person, by rendering mathematics subservient to the advantage of his country.

435. *Luxembourg.*] Francis Henry de Montmorency, who took the name of Luxembourg; marshal of France, and both duke, and peer of the realm. He gained the battle of Cassel, under the direction of Monsieur, the brother of Lewis XIV. and won the celebrated victories of Mons, Fleurus, Steinkerke, and Nerwinde, where he acted as commanding officer. He was confined to the Bastile, and exceedingly ill treated by the ministry.

Onward

THE HENRIADE. Canto VII.

Onward I see the martial Villars move
 To wrest the thunder from the bird of Jove;
 Conquest attends to bid the battle cease,
 And leaves him sovereign arbiter of peace: 440
 Denain shall own brave Villars to have been
 The worthy rival of the great Eugene.

What princely youth draws near, whose manly
 face
 United majesty, and sweetness grace?

437. *Villars.*] It was the author's original design to mention no living character through the whole poem: and the rule proposed has only been deviated from in favour of the marshal duke de Villars. He gained the battle of Fredelingue, and that of the first Hockstet. It is remarkable that in this engagement he posted himself on the same spot of ground which the duke of Marlborough afterwards occupied, when he won that very signal victory of the second Hockstet, so fatal to France. Upon resuming the command of the army, the marshal was afterwards engaged in the famous battle of Blangis, or Malplaquet, in which twenty thousand of the enemy were slain; and the loss of which was owing to the marshal's being wounded. In the year 1712, when the enemy threatened to proceed to Paris, and it was deliberated whether Lewis XIV. should not quit Versailles, the marshal de Villars defeated prince Eugene at Denain, dislodged the enemy from their post at Marchienne, raised the siege of Landrecy, took Douay, Quesnoy, and Bouchain at discretion, and afterwards agreed upon a peace at Radstat in the king's name, with the same prince Eugene, the emperor's plenipotentiary.

443. *Princely youth.*] This poem was composed in the infancy of Lewis XV.

See

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 159

See how unmov'd——Oh heavens! what sudden
shade 445

Conceals the graces which his form display'd!
Death flutters round; health, beauty, all is gone:
He falls just ready to ascend the throne:
Heaven form'd him all that's truly just, and good:
Descended, Bourbon, from thy royal blood. 450
Oh gracious God! shall fate but show mankind
A flower so sweet, and virtues so refin'd:
What could a soul so generous not obtain?
What joys would France experience from his
reign!

Produc'd, and nurtur'd by his fostering hand, 455
Fair peace, and plenty had enrich'd the land.
Each day some new beneficence had brought:
Oh how shall Gallia weep! alarming thought!
When one dark, silent sepulchre contains
The son's, the mother's, and the fire's remains.

Fallen is the tree, and from its ruin springs 461
An infant successor to Gallia's kings;
A tender shoot, from whose increasing shade
France may derive some salutary aid.
Conduct him, Fleury, to the throne of truth; 465
Wait on his years, and cultivate his youth:

Teach

Teach him self-knowledge, and, if Fleury can,
 Teach him that Lewis is no more than man.
 Inspire each virtue that can life adorn ;
 Kings for their subjects, not themselves are born.
 And thou, O France, once more arise to day ; 471
 Resume thy majesty beneath his sway :
 Let every science, which retir'd before,
 Crown thy fair temples, and adorn thy shore :
 The azure waters with thy navies sweep ; 475
 So wills the monarch of the hoary deep.
 See, from the Nile, the Euxine, and the Ind,
 Each port by nature, or by art design'd,
 Commerce aloud demands thee for her seat ;
 And spreads her richest treasures at thy feet. 480
 Adieu to terror, and adieu to war,
 The peaceful olive be thy future care.

Pursued by envy, and distraction's crew,
 A chief renown'd advances to the view ;
 Easy, not weak, when glory spurs him on, 485
 Engag'd by novelties, by trifles won :
 Though luxury displays a thousand charms,
 And smiling pleasure courts him to her arms,

484. *A chief renowned.*] A true portrait of the duke of Orleans, Regent of the kingdom.

Canto VII. THE HENRIADE. 161

Yet shall he keep all Europe in suspense
By artful politics, and manly sense. 490
The world shall move as Orleans shall guide ;
And every science flourish at his side.
Empire, my son, himself shall never reach ;
'Tis his the art of government to teach.

Now burst the lightning from the opening skies,
And Gallia's standard wav'd before their eyes. 496
Iberia's troops, array'd in arms complete,
The German eagle crush'd beneath their feet.
When thus the faint—No more remains the trace
Of Charles the fifth, his glory, or his race: 500
Each earthly being has its final hour ;
Eternal wisdom let us all adore :
From thence all human revolutions spring :
E'en Spain from Bourbon shall request a king :
Illustrious Philip shall receive the crown ; 505
And sit as monarch on Iberia's throne.
Surprize was soon succeeded by delight,
And Henry's soul enraptur'd at the sight.
Repress thy transports, cried the faint, and dread
This great event, this present to Madrid. 510
Say, who can fathom heaven's conceal'd intent,
Dangers may come, and Paris may repent.

Oh

Oh Philip ! Oh my sons ! shall France, and Spain
 Thus meet, and never be disjoin'd again !
 How long shall Policy, with curs'd hands, 515
 Scatter dire Discord's all-destroying brands ?

Thus Lewis spoke—when lo ! the scene with-
 drew,

Each object vanish'd from our hero's view :
 The sacred portals clos'd before his eyes,
 And sudden darkness o'erspread the skies. 520
 Far in the east Aurora now begun
 To show the golden chambers of the sun :
 Night's sable robe o'er other climes was laid,
 Each dream retir'd, and every fitting shade.
 The prince arose, with heavenly ardor fir'd, 525
 Unusual vigor all his soul inspir'd.
 Fear, and respect, great Bourbon, now were thine :
 Full on thy brow sat majesty divine.
 Thus when the chief, who Egypt's monarch
 quell'd,
 With God on Sinai sacred conference held ; 530
 Prostrate in dust the Jews before him lay,
 While his eyes flash'd intolerable day.



THE

HENRIADE.

CANTO the EIGHTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

The earl of Egmont comes from the king of Spain to the assistance of Mayenne and the Leaguers. Battle of Ivry, in which Mayenne is defeated, and Egmont slain. Valour, and clemency of Henry the Great.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the EIGHTH.

NO more with pride th'assembled states were
swell'd ;
Cool was their ardour, their presumption quell'd ;
The Leaguers dreading Henry's name alone,
No longer dar'd maintain the vacant throne.
Unsteady, by tumultuous passions sway'd, 5
They fear'd to crown Mayenne, nor durst degrade ;
By vain decrees they labour'd to complete,
And ratify a power, not given him yet.

This self-commission'd chief, this king un-
crown'd,
In chains of iron-rule his faction bound ; 10

9. He caused himself to be declared, by a part of the parliament, which continued attached to him, lieutenant-general of the state, and kingdom of France.

His

His willing slaves obedient to his laws,
 Resolve to fight and perish in his cause;
 Thus flush'd with hope, to counsel he convenes
 The haughty lords, on whom his fortune leans;
 Lorrains, Nemours, la Chatre, Canillac, 15
 St. Paul, the fickle Joyeuse, and Brissac:
 They came: despair, and unextinguish'd hate,
 And malice on their faded features sate;
 Some tremble in their pace, and feebly tread,
 Faint with the loss of blood in battle shed, 20
 But keen resentment prompts them to repair
 Their losses, and revenge the wounds they bear.
 Breathing revenge, all to Mayenne advance,
 High-brandishing in air the glittering lance.
 So the fierce sons of earth, as fable feigns, 25
 Where Pelion overlooks Thessalia's plains,
 With mountains piled on mountains, vainly strove,
 To scale the everlasting throne of Jove.

-15. *Lorrains, &c.*] The Chevalier *D'Aumale*, so often mentioned, and his brother the duke, were of the house of Lorraine. *Nemours* was brother by the mother's side of the duke of *Mayenne*. *La Chatre* was one of the marshals of the League. *St. Paul*, a soldier of fortune, made marshal by the duke of *Mayenne*: he was killed by the duke of *Guise*. *Joyeuse*, he is mentioned in the 4th canto. *Brissac* became of the League-party through indignation against Henry, who had said, that *he would be good for nothing till he was under ground, or in the sea.*

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 167

When sudden on a car of radiant light
Exalted, Discord flash'd upon their fight ; 30
Courage, she said, 'tis now the times demand
Your fixt resolves, lo ! succour is at hand.
Swift at the word d'Aumale, upstarting flies,
And far remote Iberia's lances spies ;
Then cried aloud, 'tis come ; th'expected aid, 35
So oft demanded, and so long delay'd.

Near to that hallow'd spot, where rest rever'd
The reliques of our kings, their march appear'd ;
The groves of polish'd spears, the targets bound
With circling gold, the shining helms around, 40
Against the sun with full reflection play,
Rival his light and shed a second day.
To meet their march the roaring rabble went,
And hail'd the mighty chief Madrid had sent ;
That chief was Egmont ; fam'd for martial fire, 45
Ambitious son of his unhappy fire ;

45. The earl of Egmont, son of admiral Egmont, who was be-headed at Brussels together with the prince de Horn. The son having adhered to the party of Philip II. king of Spain, was sent to succour the duke of Mayenne, at the head of 1800 lances. At his entrance into Paris, he received the compliments of the city ; but he who made the oration, mingling in his speech the praises of the admiral his father, the count interrupted him, saying, *Don't mention him, he was a rebel.*

168 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

At Brussels first he drew the vital air ;
 His country's weal was all his father's care,
 For that, the rage of tyrants he defied,
 And in the cause of freedom, bravely died. 50
 The servile son, as base as he was proud,
 Lickt the base hand that shed his father's blood,
 For sordid interest join'd his country's foes,
 And fought for France, regardless of her woes.
 Philip the soldier on Mayenne bestow'd, 55
 And arm'd him forth to be his guardian God ;
 Nor doubts Mayenne but slaughter and dismay
 Would quell his foes when Egmont led the way.
 With heedless arrogance their march they drew,
 And Henry's heart exulted at the view, 60
 Gods ! how his eager hopes anticipate
 And meet the moment that decides his fate.

Where Iton and fair Eure their currents lead,
 By nature blest, extends a verdant mead ;
 No wars had yet approach'd the peaceful scene, 65
 Nor warrior's footstep press'd the flowery green,
 The shepherds there, while civil rage destroy'd
 The regions round, their happy hours enjoy'd,

63. *Iton and Eure, &c.*] The battle of Ivry was fought on a plain between the rivers Iton and Eure, on the 14th of March, 1590.

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 169

Screen'd by their poverty, and heaven, from harm,
They brav'd the soldier's desolating arm, 70
Nor heard beneath their humble roofs the jar
Of hoarse, loud drums, or rough resounding war.

Thither each hostile leader his array
Directs, and desolation marks their way,
A sudden horror strikes the trembling floods, 75
The frightened shepherds seek the sheltering woods,
The partners of their grief attend their flight,
And bear their weeping infants from the fight.

Ye hapless natives of this sweet recess !
Charge not at least your king with your distress,
For peace he courts the combat, and his hand 81
Shall shed the bounteous blessings o'er the land ;
He shares your sorrows, and shall end your woes,
Nor seeks you, but to save you from your foes.

Along the ranks he darts his glancing eyes, 85
Swift as the winds his foaming courser flies,
Proud of his load, he catches with delight
The trumpet's sound, and hopes the promis'd fight.

Crown'd with his laurels, at their master's side,
A well distinguish'd groupe of warrior's ride, 90

I

D'Aumont,

D'Aumont, beneath five kings a chief renown'd,
 Biron, whose name bore terror in the sound ;
 His son, then ardent, young, and full of pride ;
 Happy, had he adher'd to virtue's side.

Grillon and Sully by the guilty fear'd, 95

Chiefs whom the League detested, yet rever'd ;

Turenne, whose virtues and unrival'd fame,

Won the fair honours of the Bouillon name ;

Ill-fated power alas ! and ill maintain'd, 99

Crush'd in the birth, and lost as soon as gain'd.

His crest amid the band brave Essex rears,

And like a palm beneath our skies appears,

91. John D'Aumont, marshal of France, who did wonders at the battle of Ivry, was the son of Peter d'Aumont and Frances de Sully, an heiress of the ancient family of Sully. He served under Henry II. Francis II. Charles IX. Henry III. and Henry IV.

92. Henry de Contand de Biron, marshal of France, and grand master of the artillery. He was a great warrior, commanded the corps de reserve at Ivry, and was very instrumental in gaining the victory.

93. Charles Contand de Biron, son of the former. He conspired afterwards against Henry IV. and was beheaded in the court of the Bastille in 1602.

97. Henry de la Tour d'Orliques, viscount of Turenne, marshal of France. Henry the Great married him to Charlotte de la Mark, princess of Sedan, in 1591. The marshal went on the wedding night to take Stenay by assault.

Among

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 171

Among our elms the lofty stranger towers,
As if he scorn'd these humbler groves of ours.
From his bright casque with orient gems array'd
And burnish'd gold, a starry lustre play'd; 106
Dear, valued gifts! with which his mistress
strove

Less to reward his courage, than his love;
Ambitious chief! the mighty bulwark grown
Of Gallia's prince, and darling of his own. 110
Such was the monarch's train, with stedfast air
And firm, they wait the signal of the war,
Glad omens from their Henry's eyes they took,
And read success in his inspiring look.

'Twas then, afflicted with inglorious dread, 115
Unblest Mayenne perceiv'd his courage fled,
Whether at length his boding heart divines
The wrath of heaven on his unjust designs,
Whether the soul prophetic of our doom,
Foresees the dreary train of ills to come, 120
Whate'er the cause, he feels a chilling fear,
But veils it with a show of seeming cheer,
Inspires his troops with ardour of renown,
And fills their hearts with courage not his own.

172 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

But Egmont at his side, with glory fir'd, 125
And the rash confidence his youth inspir'd,
Flush'd for the fight, and eager to display
His prowess, chides his infamous delay.

As when the Thracian courser from afar,
Hears the shrill trumpet and the sound of war,
A martial fire informs his vivid eye, 131

He neighs, he snorts, he bears his head on high,
Impatient of restraint he scorns the rein,
Springs o'er the fence and scours along the plain ;
Such Egmont seem'd, alert to meet his foes,
Rage in his eye, and in his bosom glows. 136

Ev'n now he ponders his approaching fame,
And looks on conquest as his rightful claim ;
Alas ! he dreams not that his pride shall gain
Nought but a grave, in Ivry's fatal plain. 140

Bourbon at length drew near, and thus inspir'd
His ardent warriors whom his presence fir'd :
Ye sons of France ! your king is at your head,
Ye see your foes, then follow where I lead,
Mark well this waving plume amid the fight, 145
Nor let the tempest shade it from your sight,
To that alone direct your constant aim,
Still sure to find it on the road to fame.

Thus

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 173

Thus spoke the chief; joy touch'd the listening
band,

They glow for battle, and the fight demand; 150

And as the hero march'd, his pious breast

With silent prayer the God of hosts address'd.

At once the legions rush with headlong pace

Behind their chiefs, and snatch the middle
space.

So where the seas with narrow frith divide 155

Cantabria's coast from Afric's desert side,

If eastern storms along the channel pour,

Sudden the fierce conflicting oceans roar,

Earth trembles at the shock, the sheeted brine

Invades the skies, the sun forgets to shine, 160

The trembling Moor believes all nature hurl'd

In ruin, and expects the falling world.

Arm'd with the bayonet the musket spread

The carnage wide, and heap'd the plains with
dead;

The fatal engine in Bayonne design'd, 165

And fram'd by Discord to lay waste mankind,

163. *Bayonet.*] The bayonet fixed at the end of the musket was not in use till long after: it took its name from Bayonne, where the first bayonets were made.]

Strikes a twin death, and can at once afford
 Th'effect of fire, and havock of the sword.
 The meeting legions force to force oppose,
 Dread, tumult, rage, and thrilling cries arose ;
 The thirst of slaughter, horror, and despair 171
 From man to man, from rank to rank repair.
 Here from his stronger son the father flies,
 There by the brother's arm the brother dies ;
 Nature was shock'd, and Eura's conscious bank 175
 Shrunk with abhorrence from the blood it drank.
 Bourbon his path right on to glory clears
 Through bristly forests of portended spears,
 O'er many a crested helm his course he sped,
 Close in his rear, serene and undismay'd 180
 Went Mornay, thoughtful and intent alone
 On Henry's life, regardless of his own.
 So, veil'd in human shape, the poets feign
 The gods engaged in arms on Phrygia's plain ;
 " So when an angel by divine command, 185
 " With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
 " Well pleas'd th'Almighty's orders to perform,
 " He mounts the whirlwind, and directs the
 storm."

The royal chief his dread commands express'd,
 The prudent dictates of a hero's breast, 190
 Mornay

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 175

Mornay the mighty charge attentive caught,
And bore it where the distant leaders fought,
The distant leaders to their troops convey
The word, their troops receive it, and obey. 194
They part, they join, in various forms are seen,
One soul informs and guides the vast machine.
Swift thro' the field return'd in haste he seeks
The prince, accosts, and guards him while he
speaks.

But still with steady virtue he forbore
To stain his Stoic hands in human gore : 200
The king alone employ'd his generous thought,
For his defence th'imbattled field he fought,
Detested war, and singularly brave
Knew boldly to face death, but never gave.

Turenne already with resistless powers 205
Repuls'd the shatter'd forces of Nemours ;
And d'Ailly fill'd the plain with dire alarms,
Proud of his thirty years consum'd in arms ;

198. This may appear obscure to the reader who does not recollect the character already given of this religious and philosophical hero. What is here meant by Mornay's *guarding the prince while he speaks*, is, the advantage which Henry derived from the watchful eye of his faithful attendant, who continually apprized the prince of the course and fluctuations of the fight; and thus put him on his guard against every approaching danger.

176 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

Still spite of age the veteran chief displays
 The well strung vigour of his youthful days ; 210
 Of all his foes, one only would presume
 To match his might, a hero in the bloom ;
 Now first indignant to the field he came,
 And parted eager for the goal of fame.
 New to the taste of Hymen, yet he fled 215
 The chaste endearments of his bridal bed,
 Disdain'd the trivial praise by beauty won,
 And panted for a soldier's fame alone.
 That cruel morn, accusing heaven in vain,
 And the curs'd League that call'd him to the
 plain, 220

His beauteous bride in arms her hero dress,
 And lac'd the ponderous corslet to his breast,
 Then cover'd with his helm of polish'd gold
 Those eyes which still she languish'd to behold.

Tow'rds d'Ailly the fierce youth, despising fear,
 Spurr'd his proud steed, and couch'd his quivering
 spear, 226

Their headlong courfers trampled, as they fled,
 The wounded heaps, the dying and the dead ;
 Poachy with blood the turf and matted grass,
 Sink fetlock deep beneath them as they pass. 230

Swift

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 177

Swift to the shock they come ; their shields sustain
The blow, their spears well pointed but in vain,
Against case harden'd iron fruitless found,
In scatter'd splinters glitter'd on the ground.

So when two clouds with thunder fraught draw
nigh, 235

And join their dark encounter in the sky ;
Struck from their sides the lightning quivers round,
Heaven roars, and mortals tremble at the sound.

Now from their steeds with unabated rage
Alighting swift, a closer war they wage ; 240

Ran Discord to the scene, and near her stood,
Death's horrid spectre, pale and smear'd with
blood :

Already shine their faulchions in their hands ;
Their doom is past, their destiny commands :
Full at each other's heart they aim alike, 245

Nor knows their fury at whose heart they strike ;
Their bucklers clash, thick strokes descend from
high,

And gleams of lightning from their helmets fly,
Blood stains their hands, but still the tempered plate
Retards a while and disappoints their fate, 250
Each wondering at the long unfinish'd fight,
Esteems his rival, and admires his might ;

178 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

'Till d'Ailly with a vigorous effort found
 The fatal pass, and stretch'd him on the ground.
 His faded eyes for ever clos'd remain, 255
 And his loose helmet rowls along the plain ;
 Then saw the wretched chief, too surely known,
 The kindred features, and embraced his son.
 But soon with horror and remorse oppress'd,
 Revers'd the guilty steel against his breast. 260
 That just revenge his hastening friends oppose ;
 When furious from the dreadful scene he rose
 Forth to the woods his cheerless journey sped,
 From arms for ever and from glory fled,
 And in the covert of a shaggy den, 265
 Dwelt a sad exile from the ways of men.
 There when the dawning day salutes the skies,
 And when at eve the chilling vapours rise,
 His unexhausted grief still flows the same,
 Still Echo sighs his son's lamented name. 270
 Tender alarms, and boding terrors brought
 The bride enquiring to the fatal spot,
 Uncertain of her doom, with anxious haste
 And faltering knees between the dead she pass'd,
 'Till stretch'd upon the plain her lord she spied, 275
 Then shriek'd, and sunk expiring at his side.

The

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 179

The damps of death upon her temples hung,
And feeble sounds scarce parted from her tongue ;
Once more her eyes a last farewell assay'd,
Once more her lips upon his lips she laid, 280
Within her arms the lifeless body press'd,
Then look'd, and sigh'd, and died upon his breast.

Deplor'd example of rebellious strife,
Ill-fated victims, father, son, and wife,
Oh may the sad remembrance of your woe, 285
Teach tears from ages yet unborn to flow,
With wholesome sorrow touch all future times,
And save the children from their father's crimes !

But say what chief disperses thus abroad
The flying League, what hero, or what god ? 290
'Tis Biron, 'tis his youthful arm o'erthrows
And drives along the plain his scatter'd foes.
D'Aumale beheld, and maddening at the sight,
Stand fast he cried, and stay your coward flight ;
Mayenne's and Guise's friends their vengeance due,
Rome, and the church, and France, expect from
you ; 296
Return then, and your pristine force recall,
Conquest is theirs who fight beneath d'Aumale.
Fosseuse assisting and Beauveau sustain
Their part, and rally the disorder'd train, 300

180 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

Before the van d'Aumale his station took,
 And the closed lines caught courage from his look.
 The chance of war now flows a backward course,
 Biron in vain withstands the driving force,
 Nesle, Augenne within his sight are slain, 305
 And Parabere and Clermont press the plain;
 Himself scarce liv'd, so fast the purple tide
 Flow'd from his wounds, and happier had he
 died.

A death so glorious with unfading fame
 For ever had adorn'd the hero's name. 310

Soon learn'd the royal chief to what distress
 The youth was fallen, courageous in excess;
 He lov'd him, not as monarch's condescend
 To love, but well, and plainly as a friend;
 Nor thought a subject's blood so mean a thing, 315
 A smile alone o'erpaid it from a king.
 Hail heaven-born friendship! the delight alone
 Of noble minds, and banish'd from the throne.
 Eager he flies, the generous fires that feed
 His heart augment his vigour and his speed. 320
 He came, and Biron kindling at the view,
 His gather'd strength to one last effort drew,
 Cheer'd by the well-known voice again he plies
 The sword, all force before the monarch flies,
 The

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 181

The king redeems thee from th' unequal strife 325
Rash youth, be faithful and deserve thy life.

Hark, a loud peal comes thundering from afar !
'Tis Discord blows afresh the flames of war ;
To thwart the monarch's virtue, with new fires
His fainting foes the beldam fiend inspires ; 330
She winds her fatal trump, the woods around
And mountains tremble at th' infernal sound.
Swift to d'Aumale the baleful notes impart
Their power, he feels the summons at his heart ;
Bourbon alone he seeks : the boisterous throng 335
Close at his heels tumultuous pours along.
So the well-scented pack, long train'd to blood,
Deep in the covert of a spacious wood,
Bay the fierce boar to battle, and elate
With heedless wrath rush headlong on their fate ;
The shrillness of the cheering horn provokes 341
Their rage, and echoes from the distant rocks.
Thus stood the monarch by the croud inclosed,
An host against his single arm opposed,
No friend at hand, no welcome aid he found, 345
Abandon'd, and by death encompass'd round.
'Twas then his fainting fire his strength renew'd
With tenfold force and vigour unsubdued,

Firm as a rock, pois'd on its base, he stood,
 That braves the blast, and scorns the dashing flood.
 Who shall relate, alas! what heroes died 351
 In that dread hour on Eura's purple side?
 Shade of the first of kings, do thou diffuse
 Thy spirit o'er my song, be thou my muse.
 Now from afar his gathering nobles came, 355
 They died for Bourbon, and he fought for them,
 When Egmont rush'd with yet unrival'd force,
 To check the storm and thwart the monarch's
 course.

Long had the chief, misled by martial pride,
 Sought Henry thro' the combat far and wide, 360
 Nor cared he, so his venturous arm might meet
 That strife, for aught of danger or defeat.
 Bourbon, he cried, advance; behold a foe
 Prepar'd to plant fresh laurels on your brow;
 Now let your arm its utmost might display, 365
 Ours be the strife, let us decide the day.
 He spoke, and lo! portentous from on high
 A stream of lightning shot along the sky,
 Slow peals of muttering thunder growl'd around,
 Beneath the trembling soldier shook the ground,
 Egmont, alas! a flattering omen draws, 371
 And dreams that heaven shall combat in his cause,
 That

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 183

That partial nature in his glory shar'd,
And thunder's voice his victory declar'd.
At the first onset with full force applied 375
His driving faulchion reach'd the monarch's side,
Fast flow'd a stream of trickling blood, tho' slight
The wound, and Egmont triumph'd at the sight.
But Bourbon unconcern'd receiv'd the blow,
And with redoubled ardour press'd his foe; 380
Pleas'd when the field of glory could afford
A noble conquest worthy of his sword.
The stinging smart serv'd only to provoke
His rage, and add new vigour to his stroke.
He springs upon the blow; the champion reels,
And the keen edge within his bosom feels, 386
O'erthrown beneath the trampling hoof he lies,
And death's dim shadow skims before his eyes,
He sees the dreary regions of the dead,
And shrinks and shudders at his father's shade. 390

Then first, their leader slain, th'Iberian host
Declin'd the fight, their vaunted spirit lost,
Like a contagion their unwarlike fear
Seiz'd all the ranks and caught from van to rear.
Generals and soldiers felt the same dismay, 395
Nor longer those command, nor these obey.

Their

184 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIII.

Their standards dropt, each routed Squadron flies,
 Their horrid clamours rend the frightened skies.
 Some strive the victor's mercy to obtain;
 Bending their suppliant knees they ask his chain:
 Others to 'scape the conquering hero's might, 401
 To Eure's near banks precipitate their flight;
 Plunge in the stream, and there inglorious die;
 To death they hasten, while from death they fly.
 The waves incumber'd intermit their course, 405
 And the choak'd stream recoils upon its source.

Mayenne embaras'd in this troubled scene,
 Lord of himself, afflicted yet serene,
 Survey'd his loss still tranquil and sedate,
 And ev'n in ruin hoped a better fate. 410
 D'Aumale, his eye with burning rage suffus'd,
 His cruel stars and dastard bands accus'd.
 All's lost, he cried, see where the cowards fly,
 O, brave Mayenne! our task then is to die.
 Die! said the chief, live rather to replace 415
 Our fortune, and sustain the cause you grace,
 Live to regain the laurels we have lost,
 Nor now desert us, when we need you most.
 Haste then, and where they straggle o'er the plain,
 Glean up the wreck and remnant of our train.

He

Canto VIH. THE HENRIADE. 185

He hears, reluctant sobs his passions speak, 421
And tears of anguish trickle down his cheek,
A slow compliance sullenly he pays,
And frowning stern at the command, obeys.
Thus the proud lion whom the Moor has tam'd,
And from the fierceness of his race reclaim'd,
Bows down beneath his swarthy master's hand,
And bends his surly front at his command,
With lowering aspect stalks behind his lord,
And grumbles while he crouches at his word. 430

Meanwhile Mayenne in speedy flight confides,
And close within the walls his shame he hides;
Prone at the monarch's feet the vanquish'd wait,
From his award, the sentence of their fate;
When from the firmament's unfolded space 435
Appear'd the manes of the Bourbon race;
Lewis in that important hour came down,
To gaze intent upon his godlike son,
To prove if that triumphant chief could tame
His soul to mercy, and deserve his fame. 440
Th'assembled captives by their looks besought
The monarch's grace, but trembled at their lot,
When thus with gentle, but determin'd look
The suppliant crowd the mighty chief bespoke.

“Be

" Be free, and use your freedom as you may, 445
 " Free to take arms against me, or obey;
 " On me, or Mayenne your election rest,
 " His be the sceptre who deserves it best!
 " Chuse your own portion, your own fate decree,
 " Chains from the League, or victory with me."

Astonish'd that a king with glory crown'd, 551
 And lord of the subjected plains around,
 Ev'n in the lap of triumph should forego
 His right of arms, and 'vantage o'er the foe,
 His grateful captives hail him at his feet 455
 Victorious, and rejoice in their defeat.
 No longer hatred rankles in their minds,
 His might subdued them, and his bounty binds;
 The title of his soldiers now they claim,
 And march where Henry leads the way to fame.

Now Bourbon merciful and mild had stay'd 461
 The carnage, and the soldier's wrath allay'd;
 No longer thro' the ranks he cleaves his way,
 Fierce as the lion bearing on his prey,
 But seems a bounteous deity, inclin'd 465
 To quell the tempest, and to cheer mankind.
 Peace o'er his brows had shed a milder grace,
 And smooth'd the warlike terrors of his face;
 Snatch'd

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 187

Snatch'd from the jaws of the devouring strife,
His captives feel themselves restor'd to life, 470
Their dangers he repells, their wants supplies,
And views and guards them with a parent's eyes.

Fame, the swift messenger of false and true,
Still as she flies encreasing to the view,
O'er mountains, oceans, and from clime to clime,
Pursuing rapid as the flight of time: 476
(Well stockt with eyes, and ears, and tongue that
sings

At once the glory and the shame of kings ;
Where she is curiosity is there,
Doubt, hope, credulity and boding fear) 480
Fill'd every quarter with her trumpet's sound,
And sung the hero's victories around :
From Tagus swift to Po the tidings ran,
And echo'd thro' the lofty Vatican.
Joy to the North the spreading sounds convey, 485
To Spain confusion, terror, and dismay.
Ill-fated Paris, and thou faithless League,
Ye priests, full-fraught with malice and intrigue,
How trembled then your temples, and what dread
Disasterous, hung o'er every guilty head ! 490
But see your guardian deity appears,
Mayenne, returning to dispel your fears !

Tho'

188 THE HENRIADE. Canto VIH.

Tho' foil'd, not lost, not hopeless tho' o'erthrown,
For still rebellious Paris is his own.

With specious gloss he covers his defeat, 495

Calls ruin, victory ; and flight, retreat ;
Confirms the doubtful, and with prudent aim
Seeks by concealing, to repair his shame.

Transient, alas ! the joy that art supplies,
For cruel truth soon scatter'd the disguise, 500
The veil of falsehood from their fate withdrew,
And open'd all its horrors to their view.

Not thus, the Fury cried, with raging mind,
Shall Discord's power be conquer'd, and confin'd:
It shall not in these destin'd walls be said, 505

That I such flame have kindled, poisons shed !
Delug'd so long with floods of gore the plain,
That Bourbon might o'er Gallia's empire reign.
Henceforth by weakness be his mind assail'd ;
Weakness may triumph where the sword has fail'd.
Force is but vain ; all other hopes are gone : 511
For Henry yields but to himself alone.

This day shall beauty's charms his bosom warm ;
Subdue his valour, and unnerve his arm.

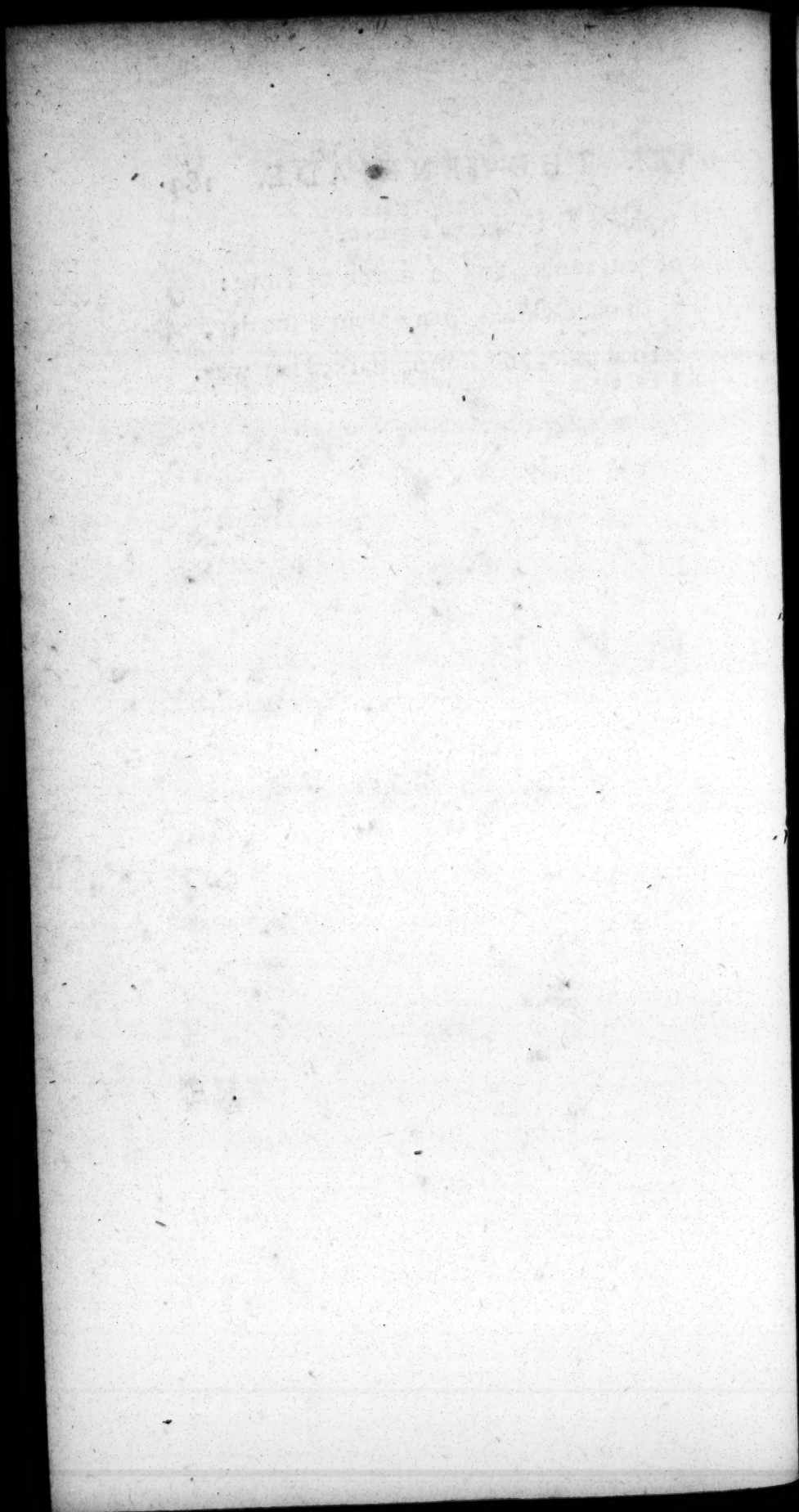
Thus Discord spoke ; and through the fields of
air, 515

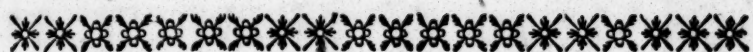
Drawn by fierce hatred on her blood-stain'd car,
Swiftly

Canto VIII. THE HENRIADE. 189

Swiftly repair'd to Cytherea's grove,
Assur'd of vengeance, and in search of Love:
Clouds of thick darkness then obscur'd the day,
Nature turned pale, and horror marked her way.

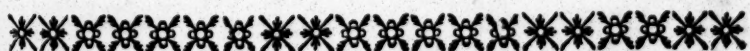
THE





THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the NINTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

Description of the temple of Love. Discord implores his power to enervate the courage of Henry IV. That hero is detained some time by Madame d'Estrée, so well known under the name of the fair Gabrielle. Mornay disengages him from his mistress, and the king returns to the army.

THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the NINTH.

FIX'D on the borders of Idalia's coast,
Where sister realms their kindred limits boast,
An ancient doom superior awe commands,
Whose strong foundations rose from nature's hands:

N. B. The author of this translation is obliged to Edward Burnaby Green, Esq. for the following Canto ; into which the beauties of the original are so happily transfused, that it needs no other recommendation than its own elegance.

2. Europe, and Asia.

3. *An ancient dome.*] This description of the temple of Love, and the painting of that passion personized, are entirely allegorical. The scene of action is placed in Cyprus, as Rome is made the abode of Policy ; because the people of the isle of Cyprus have in all ages been supposed most addicted to love, just as the court of Rome has had the reputation of being the most politic court in Europe. Love ought not then to be here considered as the son of Venus, and a fabulous deity ; but as a passion represented with all the pleasures and disorders that accompany it.

K

But

But labour since has polish'd every part, 5
 And nature yielded to the toils of art.
 Each circling plain the verdant myrtles crown,
 Unus'd to winter's desolating frown.
 Pomona here her fruits profusely pours ;
 Here Flora sheds her variegated flowers. 10
 Here, while spontaneous harvests fill the plains,
 No season changes, and no wretch complains.
 Here peace unfading sooths the sons of earth,
 Such peace as reign'd at nature's earlier birth.
 With hand of soft indulgence she displays 15
 Celestial quiet, and serenest days.
 Here every lawn in plenty's robe is dress'd,
 With every sweet but innocence blest'd.
 From side to side the streams of music roll,
 Whose soothing softness fascinates the soul. 20
 In plaintive sonnets burns the lover's flame
 Who boasts his weakness, and exults in shame.
 Each day, encircled with the fragrant store,
 The little godhead's smiles their prayers implore ;
 Eager they press to learn the poisonous art 25
 At once to pleasure, and entrance the heart.
 Delusive hope, whose charms serenely shine,
 Conducts the train to Love's enchanting shrine.

The

Canto IX. THE HENRIADE. 195

The beauteous Graces half-unveil'd advance,
Indulge the song, and join the decent dance. 30
Voluptuous Pleasure on the velvet plain
In calm tranquillity attends the strain.
Lo! by her side the heart-enchaining sighs,
Fix'd silence strongly speaking to the eyes;
The amorous transports, and the soft desires, 35
Which fan the bosom to the fiercest fires.

Thus charms the lovely entrance of the dome:
When far within the daring footsteps roam,
What scenes of horror round the altar roll,
And shake the libertine's presuming soul! 40
No sounds harmonious feast the ravish'd ears,
No more the lovely train of joys appears.
Conscious imprudence, murmurs, fears, and hate
With darkness blast the splendors of the state.
Stern jealousy, whose faltering step obeys 45
Each fell suspicion that her bliss betrays;
Ungovern'd rage, with sharpest venom stor'd,
Rears in the van his unrelenting sword.
These malice joins, who with perfidious face
Smiles at the triumphs of the savage race. 50
Pensive repentance, shuddering in the rear,
Heaves the deep groan, and showers the plenteous
tear.

Full in the centre of this horrid court,
 Where pleasure's fell companions all resort,
 Love waves for ever his fantastic rod, 55
 At once a cruel, and a tender god.
 His infant power the fates of mortals bears,
 With wanton smiles dispensing peace, and wars:
 Smooth flows deceit's insinuating art,
 Which lifts the captive, animated heart: 60
 He counts his triumphs from the splendid throne,
 While prostrate sons of pride the conqueror own;
 Careless of good he plies his savage skill,
 And dwells applauding on each deed of ill.

Now Discord opens through the ranks of joy 65
 Her vengeful passage to the kindred boy;
 Fierce in her hand the brandish'd torches glow,
 Her eye-balls flash, and blood distains her brow.
 "Where then, she cries, thy formidable darts!
 "Recline they pointed for more stubborn hearts?
 "If e'er my venom, mingled with thy fire, 71
 "Has fann'd the flame, and rais'd the passion
 higher,
 "If oft for thee I trouble nature's laws,
 "Rise, fly to vengeance of my injur'd cause.
 "Crush'd are my snakes beneath a conqueror's feet,
 "The laurel now and peaceful olive meet. 76
 "Amid

Canto IX. THE HENRIADE. 197

- " Amid the tumults of a civil war
" Meek-stepping Clemency attends his car ;
" Fix'd to the standards, waving in the wind,
" She sooths in Discord's spite the rebel mind. 80
" One victory gain'd, my throne, my empire
 falls ;
" Lo ! Henry showers his rage on Paris' walls.
" He flies to fight, to conquer, and forgive ;
" Fast bound in brazen chains must Discord live.
" 'Tis thine to check the torrent of his course, 85
" And drop soft poison on his valour's source.
" Yes, bend the victim to thy conquering dart,
" And quell each virtue of his stubborn heart.
" Of old (and well thou know'st,) thy sovereign
 care
" Bow'd great Alcides to th' imperial fair. 90
" By thee proud Anthony's enervate mind
" For Cleopatra's form each thought resign'd ;
" In flight inglorious o'er the ocean hurl'd,
" For her he quits the empire of the world.
" Henry alone resists thy dread command, 95
" Go, blast the laurels in his daring hand.
" His brows entwine with myrtle's amorous charms,
" And sink the slumbering warrior in thy arms.

198 THE HENRIADE. Canto IX.

“Fly to support ; he shakes the tottering throne :

“Go, shield an empire, and a cause thine own.”

The monster spoke : the trembling roof around
Returns the horrors of the dreadful sound.

Stretch'd on his flowery couch, the listening god
With artful smiles consented at her nod.

Arm'd with his golden deaths resolv'd he flies 105

Along the bright dominion of the skies :

With pleasures, sports, and graces in his train

The zephyrs bear him to the Gallic plain.

Straight he discovers with malicious joy

The feeble Simois, and the fields of Troy ; 110

And laughs, reflecting on those seats renown'd

O'er many a palace mouldering on the ground.

Venice from far, fair city ! strikes his sight,

The prodigy of earth, and art's delight ;

Which towers supreme, as ocean's godhead
gave 115

Her power full empire o'er th'encircling wave.

Sicilia's plain his rapid flight retards,

Where his own genius nurs'd the pastoral bards ;

Where fame reports through secret paths he led

The wandering waves from amorous Alpheus'
bed. 120

Now

Canto IX. THE HENRIADE. 199

Now quitting Arethusa's lovely shore
Swift to Vauclusia's seats his course he bore ;
Asylum soft: in life's serener days
Where lovesick Petrarch sigh'd his pensive lays.
From thence his eyes survey the favourite strand
Where Anet's walls uprose at his command ; 126
Where art's rich toils superior reverence claim,
And still beams forth Diana's cypher'd name.
There on her tomb the joys, and graces shower
In grateful memory each fragrant flower. 130

The plains of Ivry Love at length descries :
The king intent on some new enterprize,
There first with softer pleasures sooths his breast,
And lulls his thunders to a transient rest.
Around his side the warrior youth display'd 135
Pursue the labours of the sylvan shade.
The godhead triumphs in his future pain,
Sharpens his arrows, and prepares his chain ;

122. *Vauclusia.*] A place in Provence, celebrated for the residence of Petrarch: there we may still see the remains of a house, which is called *the house of Petrarch*.

126. Anet was built by Henry II. for Diana de Poitiers, whose cyphers are intermixed with all the ornaments of that castle. It is situated not far from the plains of Ivry.

The winds, which erst he smooth'd, his nod
alarms,

He speaks, and sets the elements in arms. 140

From every side he calls the furious storms;
A weight of clouds the face of heaven deforms;
Th'impetuous torrent rushes from the sky;
The thunder rolls, the livid lightnings fly:
Each boisterous brother at his mandate springs, 145
And earth lies shadow'd with their murky wings.
Bright Phœbus sinks with night's incumbent load,
And conscious nature shudders at the god.

O'er the dark plains through miry, dubious ways
Alone, and comfortless the monarch strays: 150
When watchful love displays the torch's light,
Whose twinkling radiance strikes upon his sight.
The hostile star, with fatal joy betray'd,
He swiftly follows through the dreary shade.
Such fatal joy deluded wanderers show, 155
Led by the vapour's transitory glow;
The guide malignant through the midnight gloom
Quits not the wretch, but leads him to his doom.

Once in the horrors of this lone retreat
Roam'd a fair virgin's solitary feet. 160
Silent, the centre of the fort within,
She waits her father from the battle's din;

Loyal

Loyal in council, veteran in the plain,
 Who shone the foremost of his sovereign's train :
 D'Estrée her name, and nature's guardian care 165
 Had shower'd her treasures to adorn the fair.
 Beauty less fair the Grecian maid possess'd,
 Whose guilt betray'd her Menelaus' rest :
 Beauty less bright at Tarsus she display'd,
 Whom the great master of the world obey'd; 170

165. *D'Estrée*] Gabrielle D'Estrée of an ancient family in Picardy, daughter, and grand daughter of the grand master of the ordonnance; espoused to the lord of Liancourt, and since became duchess of Beaufort. Henry IV. fell violently in love with her during the civil wars; he went sometimes in a private dress to see her. One day he even disguised himself as a peasant, passed through the midst of the enemies guards, and arrived at her house, not without some danger of being taken.

170. *The master of the world obey'd.*] Cleopatra on going to Tarsus, where Anthony had sent for her, made the voyage in a vessel shining with gold, and adorned with the finest paintings; the sails were of purple, and the cordage of silk and gold. Cleopatra was dressed so as to represent the goddess Venus; her women represented nymphs and graces; and on the poop and prow were many beautiful children, disguised like Cupids. In this manner she proceeded along the river Cydnus, to the sound of a thousand musical instruments: all the people of Tarsus took her for a goddess; they quitted Anthony's tribunal and ran to see her: that Roman himself went to meet her, and became desperately in love. PLUTARCH.

The reader will not be displeased with this description by Dryden, in *All for Love*.

Her galley down the silver Cydnus row'd,
 The tackling silk, the streamers wav'd with gold,
 The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails:
 Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were plac'd,
 Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay :

While to the shore th' enamour'd Cydnians move,
And incense shed as to the queen of love.

The nymph was now at that unsteady age
When headstrong passions all the mind engage.
No lovers yet their sighing vows impart, 175
Though form'd for love, yet generous was her
heart.

Thus the fair beauties of the blushing rose
Coy in their spring to wanton zephyr close :
But the full lustre of their stores display
To the kind influence of a summer's day. 180

Cupid, preparing to ensnare the dame,
Slyly approaches with a borrow'd name.

She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders hearts,
Neglecting she could take 'em: boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds
That play'd about her face: but if she smiled,
A darting glory seem'd to blaze abroad ;
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object: to soft flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they play'd,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight,
And both to thought. 'Twas heaven, or somewhat more ;
For she so charm'd all hearts, that gazing crowds,
Stood panting on the shore, and waked breath
To give their welcome voice.

No dart, no torch his little hands employ,
In voice, and figure an unmeaning boy.

“ From yonder stream, he cried, to this fair dome

“ The conqueror of great Mayenne is come.” 186

Full through her soul the soft infection ran ;

She pants to captivate the godlike man.

A livelier bloom he graceful features prove, 189

Which crowns the triumphs of applauding love.

What could he doubt? with charms celestial spread

Th’attractive virgin to the king he led.

With double glow each ornament of art

In nature’s guise enslaves th’enamour’d heart.

Her golden tresses floating loose in air 195

Now kifs the rising bosom of the fair ;

Now start to view the heavenly sweets display’d,

By native innocence more lovely made.

No stern, no gloomy look which puts to flight

Each thought of love, of beauty, and delight; 200

But the mild softness of a decent shame,

The cheek just tipping with the purest flame :

Commanding reverence, which excites desires,

And sheds when conquer’d love’s increasing fires.

Now the arch god with each enchanting grace

Diffus’d resistless beauties o’er the place. 206

The plenteous myrtle with spontaneous birth
Springs from the bosom of the liberal earth.
Its amorous foliage decorates the glade,
And wooes the thoughtless to its fatal shade. 210
Till bands unseen th'entangled step betray;
Fear bids depart, but pleasure wins their stay.

Soft through the shade a soothing Lethe rolls,
Where happy lovers with inebriate souls
Quaff long oblivion to departed fame; 215
So unresisted love's all conquering flame!
How chang'd the scene! here every bosom glows;
Pour'd from each sweet th'entrancing venom flows.
Love sounds throughout: around, the feather'd
choir

Indulge the song and burn with mutual fire. 220
The hind arising ere the dawn of day
To Ceres' golden treasures bends his way;
Now stops aghast; now heaves the plaintive sighs,
And feels the new born passion with surprize.
No more his soul the toils of harvest move; 225
He dwells delighted on the scenes of love:
While heedless of her flock the maiden stands,
And drops the spindle from her faltering hands.
Could fair D'Estrée resist the magic charm?
What power can baffle love's prevailing arm. 230
Superior

Superior foes her virgin-bosom load ;
 At once her youth, a hero, and a god.
 Meanwhile the king with dauntless soul prepares
 In thought to mingle with the battle's cares.
 Some subtle demon plies his secret art, 235
 And free-born virtue fighting quits the heart.
 To softer scenes his amorous soul betray'd,
 Sees, hears, and loves alone the heavenly maid.
 But now the chieftains of th'embattled band
 With ardent vows their absent king demand ; 240
 They shudder'd for his life, but little knew
 Their fears were only to his glory due :
 Immers'd in grief the soldier's conquering pride
 Sinks to despair, no Henry for their guide.
 Thy guardian power, O France, no longer stays
 To grant continuance of the soft delays : 246
 At Lewis' nod descending from the skies
 Swift to the succour of his son he flies.
 Alighting now o'er earth's extended round
 He seeks a mind for wisdom's stores renown'd, 250
 Not where pale, hungry, speechless students claim,
 Fix'd in a midnight gloom, her sacred name,
 But in fair Ivry, midst the din of arms,
 Where the flush'd warriors glow with conquest's
 charms.

At

At length the genius stays his ardent flight, 255
 Where Calvin's floating banners spread to fight.
 There Mornay he address'd; when reason leads,
 Her solid influence consecrates our deeds.
 As o'er the heathen world she pour'd her ray,
 Whose virtues christians blushing might survey,
 Reason Aurelia's sentiments refin'd, 261
 And shower'd ideas over Plato's mind.

Severe, but friendly Mornay knew the art
 At once to mend, and captivate the heart.
 His deeds more reverence than his doctrines move,
 Each virtue met his fond parental love. 266
 Full steel'd to pleasure, covetous of toils,
 He look'd on dangers with undaunted smiles.
 No poisonous frauds of palaces controul
 His nobly-stubborn purity of soul. 270
 Thus Arethusa's genial waters flow
 Soft to the bosom of the deep below,
 A crystal pure, unconscious of a stain,
 Spite of the billows of the foaming main.

The generous Mornay, by the goddess led, 275
 Hastes to the seats, where rapturous pleasure shed
 Her soothing opiate on the victor's breast,
 And lull'd awhile the fates of France to rest.

Triumphant

Canto IX. THE HENRIADE. 207

Triumphant love each lavish charm employs
To blast his glory with redoubled joys. 280
A waste of transports fill the round of day,
Transports which fly too swiftly to decay.
To vengeance fir'd the little god descry'd
Mornay, with heaven-born wisdom for his guide:
Full at the warrior-chief he points his dart 285
To lull his senses, and enthrall his heart.
Thick fall the blunted shafts, Mornay awaits
The king's return, and eyes th'accurs'd retreats.

Fast by the stream, midst nature's rich perfume,
Sacred to silent ease where myrtles bloom, 290
D'Estrée on Henry lavish'd all her charms,
Melting he glow'd, and languish'd in her arms.
No cooling change their blissful moments know,
Soft from their eyes the tears of rapture flow;
Tears, which redouble every fond delight, 295
And heavenly feelings of the soul excite;
Flush'd with the full-blown rage of keen desires,
Which love can paint, for love alone inspires.

The wanton youths unfold the hero's vest,
While smiling pleasures fan his soul to rest. 300
One holds the cuirass reeking from the plain,
One grasps the sword, yet never worn in vain;

And

And laughs, while poising in his hand he shows
The throne's best guard, and terror of its foes.

From Discord's voice the strains of insult roll,
Each cruel transport brooding in her soul, 306
With active fury at the favouring hour
To rouse the serpent of confederate power.

While Henry riots in the soft repose,
She wakes to vengeance his relentless foes. 310

Now in the fragrant gardens of delight
Mornay appears: he blushes at the sight;
Their startled bosoms mutual fears engage,
And a dead silence chains th'approaching sage.

But looks in silence bow'd to earth, impart 315
A powerful language to the sovereign's heart;
And sadness lowering in the clouded face
Proclaims at once his weakness, and disgrace.

The witness of their faults men seldom bear,
Most kings had ill requited Mornay's care. 320

Fear not, he cries, our anger; rest at ease;
Who points my error cannot fail to please:
Worthy of thee our bosom shall remain;
'Tis well: and Henry is himself again.

Love now resigns that virtue he betray'd: 325
Fly, let us quit this soft, inglorious shade:

Yes,

Canto IX. THE HENRIADE. 209

Yes, quit the scenes, where my rebellious flame
Would fondling still the silken fetters frame:
Self-conquest surely boasts the noblest charms,
We'll brave the power of love in glory's arms; 330
Scatter destruction o'er th'extended shore,
And sheath our error in the Spaniard's gore.
These generous words the sage's soul inspire:
Yes, now my sovereign beams with native fire.
Each rebel passion feels thy conquering reins, 335
O great protector of thy country's plains!
Love adds fresh lustre to the blaze of fame,
For triumphs there superior greatness claim.
He said; the monarch hastens to depart,
But oh! what sorrows load his amorous heart! 340
Still, as he flies, he cannot but adore;
His tears he censures, yet he weeps the more.
Forc'd by the sage, attracted by the fair,
He flies, returns, and quits her in despair.
D'Estrée, unable to sustain the strife, 345
Falls prostrate rest of colour, as of life.
A sudden night invades her beauteous eyes;
Love who perceiv'd it, sent forth dreadful cries.
Pierc'd to the soul, left death's eternal shade
Should rob his empire of the lovely maid: 350
Should

Should spoil the lustre of so fair a frame,
 Destin'd thro' France to spread the genial flame.
 Wrapt in his arms, again her eyelids move,
 And gently open to the voice of love. 354

The king she names, the king demands in vain,
 Now looks, now closes her bright eyes again.
 Love bath'd in sorrow for the suffering fair
 Recall'd her sinking spirit by his prayer;
 With flattering hopes her solaced soul betray'd,
 And sooth'd those evils which himself had made.

Mornay of steady and relentless mind, 361
 Led on the monarch, still but half resign'd.
 Firm force, and godlike virtue point the way,
 While glory's hands the laurel wreath display;
 And love indignant to the victor's fame, 365
 Flies far from Anet to conceal his shame.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO the TENTH.



THE ARGUMENT.

*The king returns to the army. Renews the siege.
The duel betwixt Turenne and Aumale. A famine
in the city. The king himself relieves the inhabitants
whom he besieges. Heaven at length recompenses his
virtues. Truth descends to enlighten him. Paris
opens her gates, and the war is finished.*

THE
HENRIADE

CANTO the TENTH.

THOSE fatal moments lost in soft repose
Had waked the courage of the vanquish'd
foes.

Rebellion breath'd again, and faction's schemes
Flush'd the deluded throng with golden dreams.
Yet vain their hopes, for smit with generous
fame

5

And active zeal the martial Bourbon came,
Eager to reap the harvest he had sown,
And make the field of conquest all his own.
Again his banners wav'd aloft in air,
And Paris saw them with renew'd despair.
Again the chief before her walls appears ;
Scarcely yet recover'd from a siege's fears ;

10

I

Those

Those very walls, where yet sulphureous smoke
 With desolation marks the cannon's stroke,
 Which now with ruins had bestrew'd the land, 15
 Had not compassion check'd the hero's hand ;
 When the bright angel, whose obedience still,
 Guardian of France, performs th' Almighty's will,
 Bad his soft breast with tender mercies glow,
 With-held his arm, and stopt the falling blow. 20
 Through the king's camp no voice was heard
 around

But songs of mirth, and joy's tumultuous sound.
 While each brave warrior, anxious for the fray,
 With eyes impatient marks the destin'd prey.
 Meantime the haughty legions all dismay'd, 25
 Press'd round their prudent chief, and sued for
 aid ;

When thus Aumale, of brave impetuous soul,
 Abhorring counsel, and above controul ;
 " We have not yet so learn'd our warfare here
 " To sneak to hiding-holes, and crouch for fear ;
 " Curs'd be the man whose counsel thither tends ;
 " The foe comes forward—let us meet them,
 friends ;
 " Not tamely wait till other 'vantage calls,
 " And rust in sloth beneath those coward walls ;
 " On

“ On then, and conquer—fortune oft will spare
 “ A smile to crown the efforts of despair. 36
 “ Frenchmen attack’d, already are o’erthrown—
 “ Seek then your safeties from yourselves alone.
 “ Ye chiefs, who hear me, haste where glory calls,
 “ Know, soldiers, know your leaders are your
 walls.” 40

He spoke—amaz’d the Leaguers heard each
 sound,

And turn’d their eyes in silence to the ground.
 He blush’d with shame, and in each leader’s face
 Read their refusal, and his own disgrace.

“ Ye will not follow then, ye heroes tame, 45
 “ Nor wish I basely to survive the shame ;
 “ Well—shrink at dangers still—so shall not I—
 “ Alone I go—to conquer or to die.”

He said ; and from the city gate in martial pride
 Boldly advanc’d with firm impetuous stride. 50
 Before his steps the shrill-tongued herald went,
 To hurl defiance at each warrior’s tent.

Ev’n to the king’s abode the marshal came,
 And challeng’d combat in the hero’s name.

“ Ye daring sons of glory, loud he cried, 55
 “ Now be your valour with your fortune tried,

“ Aumale

"Aumale in single combat waits you here,

"By me he calls to arms;—stand forth, appear."

The valiant chiefs the desperate challenge heard,
 Their zeal rekindling at each haughty word, 60
 Each warrior stern impatient for the fray,
 Hoped the king's voice, and hail'd the glorious
 day.

Courage in all had form'd an equal right:

Turenne alone found favour in his sight. 64

"Go, said the prince, chastise the daring foe,

"France to thy hands shall all her glory owe;

"Remember, soldier, 'tis a glorious cause,

"Thy own, thy king's, thy country, and thy
 laws;

"I'll arm thee for the fight"—the monarch said;

And from his girdle loos'd the shining blade. 70

When thus Turenne—"By his good sword I swear,

"By thee, my king, each subject's darling care,

"Thus nobly honour'd in my prince's voice,

"My ready zeal shall never shame thy choice."

He spoke; while manly valour flush'd his face,
 And his heart sprung to meet the king's embrace!
 Then to the field, impetuous as a flood, 77
 Rush'd where Aumale, the daring champion, stood,
 To

To Paris' walls ran all the Leaguer-bands,
 While round their king his faithful army stands. 80
 With stedfast eye, which anxious care reveal'd,
 Each side beheld their champion take the field.
 While voice and gesture on each part unite
 To warm each hero for the dreadful fight.

Meantime a cloud the vaulted sky deforms, 85
 Pregnant it seem'd with more than common storms,
 While from its womb of darkness, strange to tell,
 Burst forth in flames the monstrous brood of hell.
 There was hot Zeal, which franticleaps all bounds,
 And Discord smiling on her thousand wounds, 90
 There artful Policy, designing, fly,
 With heart of falsehood, and with scowling eye;
 There the mad demon too of battles flood,
 All Leaguer-gods and drunk with human blood.
 Hither they haste, and land on Paris' walls, 95
 Aumale, their League, the cause, their interest
 calls.

When lo! an angel from the azure sky,
 The faithful servant of the God on high,
 Descended—round his head in splendor play
 Beams that eclipse the lustre of the day. 100
 On wings of fire he shaped his chearful flight,
 And mark'd his passage with a train of light.

A fruitful olive branch one hand sustain'd,
 Prefage of happy days, and peace regain'd :
 His other hand upheld a flaming sword, 105
 And shook the terrors of th'eternal Lord ;
 That sword with which the avenging angel arm'd
 Smote the first-born—confounded and disarm'd
 Aghast at once shrunk all the fiends of hell,
 While to the ground their pointless weapons fell.
 And resolution sicken'd all o'erthrown 111
 By some resistless force from hands unknown.
 So Dagon, worship'd on Philistia's shore,
 Whose purple altars ran with human gore,
 Before the ark with tottering ruin nods, 115
 And the fallen idol owns the God of Gods.

Paris, the king, the army, heaven and hell
 Witness'd the combat ;—at the trumpet's swell
 On to the field the ready warriors came,
 Conscious of valour, and a-thirst for fame. 120
 Their hands unus'd the cumbrous weight to wield,
 Disdain'd to fight beneath the glittering shield,
 The specious armour of inglorious knight
 Proof 'gainst all blows, and dazzling to the sight ;
 They scorn'd th' equipment of such coward
 dress, 125
 Which lengthening combat, made all danger less.
 In

In courage firm advanc'd each haughty lord,
 Man against man, and sword oppos'd to sword.
 " O God of kings! the royal champion cried,
 " Judge thou my cause, and combat on my side;
 " Courage I vaunt not of, an idle name, 131
 " When heavenly justice bars the warrior's claim;
 " Not from myself, I dare the glorious fight,
 " My God shall arm me who approves my right."

To whom Aumale, " In deeds of valour known,
 " Be my reliance on this arm alone. 136
 " Our fate depends on us, the mind afraid
 " Prays to his God in vain for needful aid.
 " Calm in the heavens he views our equal fight,
 " And smiling conquest proves the hero's right.
 " The God of war's is valour"—stern he cry'd,
 And with a look of fell contemptuous pride 142
 Gaz'd on his rival, whose firm modest mind
 Spoke in his face, courageous and resign'd.

Now sounds the trumpet, to the dubious fray
 Rush the brave chiefs, impatient of delay. 146
 Whate'er of skill, whate'er of strength is known,
 By turns each daring champion proves his own.
 While all around the troops with anxious fight,
 Half pleas'd, half frighted, view the desperate fight.

The rushing swords cast forth promiscuous rays,
 Blinding the eye-sight with their trembling
 blaze.

As when the sun athwart the silver streams
 Darts his strong light, and breaks in quivering
 beams: 154

The thronging crowds around with eyes intent
 Look on amaz'd, and wait the dread event.

With nervous strength and fury uncontroul'd,
 Full of himself, and as a lion bold,
 Seems stern Aumale; the whiles his rival brave,
 Nor proud of strength, nor passion's headlong
 slave,

Collected in himself awaits his foe, 161

Smiles at his rage, and wards each furious blow.

In vain Aumale his utmost efforts tries,

His arm no more its wonted strength supplies,

While cool Turenne the combat's rage renews,

Attacks with vigour, and with skill pursues, 166

Till proud Aumale sinks baffled to the ground,

And his hot blood flows reeking from the
 wound;

The champion falls: hell echoes with despair,

And dreadful sounds affright the troubled air. 170

League,

Canto X. THE HENRIADE. 221

“ League, thou art all o’erthrown, the prize is
won,

“ Bourbon, thou hast it now—our reign is done.”

The wretched people with lamenting cries

Attest their grief, and rend the vaulted skies ; 174

Aumale all weak, and stretch’d upon the sand,

His glittering sword fallen useless from his hand,

Fainting, yet strives fresh vigour to regain,

And seems to threaten still, tho’ all in vain.

Fain would he speak, while deep-fetch’d lab’ring
breath

Denies him utterance in the pangs of death. 180

Shame’s quickening sense augments his furious
air,

And his red eyeballs flash extreme despair.

He heaves, he sinks; he struggles all in vain,

His loosen’d limbs fall lifeless on the plain ;

To Paris’ walls he lifts his closing eye, 185

Then dies indignant with a desperate sigh.

Mayenne, thou saw’st him die, and at each look

Thy trembling nerves with shuddering horrors
shook,

Then to thy mind thy own approaching fall

Came full, and thou wast conquer’d with Au-
male. 190

Canto X. THE HENRIADE. 223

Meantime the king, whom milder thoughts en-
gage, 205

Calm'd their high transports, and repress'd their
rage.

Stubborn howe'er, and adverse to his will,
Howe'er ungrateful, 'twas his country still ;
Hated by subjects whom he wish'd to save,
The mercies they denied, his virtue gave ; 210

Pleas'd if his bounty could their crimes efface,
And force the wretched to accept of grace.

All desperate means he shudder'd to employ,
He sought to conquer Paris, not destroy :

Famine perhaps, and lengthen'd scenes of
woe

Might bend to law a proud mistaken foe ;
Brought up in plenty, with abundance fed,
To ease and all the train of pleasures bred ;
His people prest by want's impulsive sting
Might seek for mercy from their patriot king. 220

Rebellion's sons, whom vengeance fain would
spare,

Mistook for weakness Henry's pious care.

215. *Famine, &c.*] Henry IV. blockaded Paris in 1590, with less than twenty thousand men.

His valour all forgot, in stubborn pride
They brav'd their master, and the king defied.

But when along the captive Seine no more 225
The freighted vessels bear the corny store;
When desperate Famine with her meagre train,
With Death her consort, spreads her baneful reign,
In vain the wretch sends forth his piteous cries,
Looks up in vain for food, and gasping dies. 230
The rich no more preserve their wasting health,
But pine with hunger in the midst of wealth.
No sound of joy th'afflicted city knows,
No sound, but such as witness'd direful woes.
No more, their heads with festive chaplets crown'd,
In songs of joy they send the goblet round. 236
No wines provoke excess, no savoury meats
Quicken the jaded stomach. Thro' the streets,
Emaciate, pale, with dead, dull, ghastly glare
They wander victims of the fiend Despair. 240
The weak old man, worn out with hunger's rage,
Sees his child perish in its cradled age;
Here drops a family entire, and there
Groveling in dust, and worn with meagre care,
The hagg'd wretches in life's latest stage 245
Fight for an offal with relentless rage.

Fain

Canto X. THE HENRIADE. 225

Fain would the living prey upon the dead,
While the dry bones are kneaded into bread.
What will not misery do? This curst repast
Promotes the work of death, and proves their last.

Mean time the priests, those reverend sons of
prayer, 251

Who preach up fasting, which they never share,
Batten'd in plenty, deaf to hunger's cries,
Which from their bounty met no wish'd supplies;
Yet went they forth with true fanatic zeal 255
To preach those virtues which they could not feel,
To the poor wretch, death hanging on his eyes,
Their liberal hand would ope the friendly skies;
To some they talk'd of vengeance sent from God,
And Henry punish'd with th'Almighty's rod; 260
Of Paris sav'd by heaven's immediate love,
And manna dropping from the clouds above;

248. *The dry bones are kneaded into bread.*] The Spanish ambassador, sent to the League, advised the making bread of the bones of the dead: this was done, but it only served to hasten the death of many thousand men. Thus the besieged, who did not dare to eat the flesh of those of their fellow-citizens who were just slain, fed freely upon their bones.

253. *Batten'd in plenty.*] They visited says Mezeray, the houses of the clergy, and the convents, which were found fully provided, and even that of the capuchins, with provisions for above a year.

O'er-aw'd by power, by artful priests deceiv'd,
 The crowd obsequious what they taught believ'd ;
 Submissive, half content, resign'd their breath, 265
 Nay, happy too, they triumph'd in their death.

With foreign troops, to swell affliction's tide,
 The famish'd city swarm'd on every side ;
 Their breasts, where pity never learn'd to glow,
 Lust'd for rapine, and rejoic'd in woe. 270
 These came from haughty Belgia's plains, and
 those

Helvetia's monsters, hireling friends or foes.
 To mercy deaf, on misery's sons they press,
 And snatch the little from extreme distress.
 Not for the foldier's plunder, hidden store, 275
 And heap'd up riches, useful now no more ;
 Not urg'd by lust, and lur'd by beauty's charms,
 To force the virgin from her mother's arms ;
 Their murderous torments rag'd for food conceal'd,
 Supports laid up, and pittance unreveal'd. 280

272. *Helvetia's monsters, &c.*] The Swiss, who were at Paris in the pay of the duke of Mayenne, according to all the historians of those times, committed the most dreadful excesses : to them alone, Voltaire observes, ought to be applied the term Barbarians; and not to their nation, which is distinguished by the probity and good sense of the individuals of which it is composed, who only think of preserving their own liberty, and never suppressing that of others.

A woman — God ! must faithful memory tell
 A deed which bears the horrid stamp of hell !
 Their flinty hearts, which never felt remorse,
 Robb'd of her little all with brutal force.
 One tender infant left, her late fond care, 285
 The frantic mother eyed with fell despair.
 Then furious all at once, with murderous blade
 Rush'd where the dear devoted offspring laid;
 The smiling babe stretch'd forth its little arms ;
 Its helpless age, sweet looks, and guileless charms,
 Spoke daggers to her, while her bosom burns 291
 With maddening rage, remorse, and love by turns.
 Fain would she backward turn, and strive to shun
 The wretched deed which famine wishes done :
 Thrice did she rear the sword, and all dismay'd 295
 Thrice did she trembling drop the bloodless blade.
 Till furious grown, in hollow voice she cries,
 " Curs'd be the fruitful bed, and nuptial ties,
 " And thou, unhappy offspring of my womb,
 " Brought into being to receive thy doom, 300

281. *A woman, &c.*] This fact is mentioned in all the memoirs of that time. The like horrible scenes also happened at the siege of the city of Sancerre. Josephus relates an instance of the same kind in his account of the siege of Jerusalem.

" Didst thou accept this idol boon of life
 " To die by famine, or these tyrants' strife?
 " Shouldst thou escape their unrelenting rage,
 " Will pinching hunger spare thy softer age?
 " Then wherefore shouldst thou live? to weep in
 vain 305
 " A wretched wanderer o'er thy parent slain.
 " No, die with me, ere keen reflection knows
 " With bitter anguish to augment thy woes.
 " Give me,—thou shalt—nor wait the formal
 grave,
 " Give back the blood thy helpless mother gave.
 " I will entomb thee, and the world shall see 311
 " A desperate crime unheard of yet, in me."
 She said, and frantic with extreme despair
 Plung'd the keen poniard in her darling heir.

Hither by hunger drawn, the ruffians sped 315
 While yet the mother on the infant fed.
 Their eyes with eager joy her place survey,
 Like savage tigers gloating on their prey.
 With furious wish they scan the mansion o'er,
 Then rush in rage and burst the jarring door. 320

When, dreadful sight! a form with horror wild,
 That seem'd a woman, o'er a murder'd child

Set all aghast, and in his reeking blood
 Bath'd her fell hands, and sought a present food:
 "Yes, cried the wretch, the bloody deed is done,
 "Look there, inhuman monsters—'tis my son. 326
 "These hands had never worn this purple hue,
 "Nor this dear offspring perish'd, but for you.
 "Now, ruffians, now with happy transport strike,
 "Feed on the mother and the babe alike. 330
 "Why heaves your breast with such unusual awe?
 "Have I alone offended nature's law?
 "Why stare you all on me? such horrid food
 "Befits ye best, ye lustful sons of blood." 334

Furious she spoke, and staring, desperate wild,
 Plung'd home the sword, and died upon her child.
 The dreadful sight all power of speech controuls,
 And harrows up ev'n these barbarian souls.
 In dire amaze they cast their eyes around,
 And fear an angry God in every sound; 340
 While the whole city, at the scene dismay'd,
 Call'd loud for death, the wretch's last kind aid.
 Ev'n to the king the dreadful rumour ran,
 His bowels yearn'd—he felt himself a man.
 At each recital tender passions rose, 345
 And tearful mercy wept a nation's woes.

O God,

O God, he cried, to whom my thoughts are bare,
 Who knowst whate'er I can, and all I dare,
 To thee I lift these hands unstain'd with blood,
 Thou knowst I war not 'gainst my country's good.
 To me impute not nor their crimes nor woes; 351
 Let Mayenne say, from whence the ruin flows.
 For all these ills let him advance the plea,
 Which tyrants only use, necessity;
 To be thy country's foe, Mayenne, be thine; 355
 To be its father, be that duty mine.
 I am their father, and would wish to spare
 Rebellious children with a father's care.
 Should my compassion then but madly arm
 A desperate rebel to extend his harm? 360
 Or must I lose my regal crown to show
 Indulgent mercy on a subject foe?
 Yes—let him live, and if such mercy cost
 So dear a price as all my kingdoms lost,
 Let this memorial dignify my grave, 365
 To rule o'er foes I fought not, but to save.

He said, and bad the storms of vengeance cease,
 And hush'd the tumults with returning peace.
 Paris again her chearful accents heard,
 And willing troops obey'd their Henry's word. 370

Now

Canto X. THE HENRIADE. 231

Now on the walls the throng impetuous swarms,
And all around, pale, trembling forms in arms,
Stalk like the ghosts, which from the shades of
night,

Compell'd by magic force, revisit light,
When potent magi with enchantments fell 375
Invoke the powers below, and startle hell.

What admiration swell'd each happy breast
To find a guardian in their foe profess !
By their own chiefs deserted and betray'd,
An adverse army lent a willing aid. 380

These pikes, which late dealt slaughter all around,
With desperate force no longer rear'd to wound,
Now kindly rais'd to second Henry's care,
On their stain'd points the cheering nurture bear.

" Are these, said they, the monsters of mankind ?
" Are these the workings of a tyrant mind ? 386
" This the proud king, sad outcast of his God,
" His passion's easy slave, and people's rod ?

384. *On their stain'd points, &c.*] Henry IV. had the goodness to permit his officers to send, as we are informed by Mezeray, refreshments to their old friends and to the ladies, while the soldiers followed the example set them by their officers. The king had also the generosity to suffer most of those to leave Paris who attempted it. Thus it really happened that the besiegers fed the besieged.

"No

" No, 'tis the image of that Power above, 389
 " Who acts with justice, and delights in love ;
 " He triumphs, yet forgives, nor seeks to show
 " Revenge's malice on a conquer'd foe.
 " Nay more, he comforts, and with royal grace
 " Extends assistance to a rebel race. 394
 " Be Discord banish'd from this glorious hour,
 " And our blood flow but to cement his power ;
 " And steady zeal, no longer faction's slave,
 " For him employ that life, he wish'd to save."

Such was the language Paris' sons express,
 While soft emotions fill'd each grateful breast.
 But who, alas ! can strong assurance ground 401
 On sickly friendship, which exhales in sound ?
 What hopes from such a race so light and vain,
 Who only idly rise to fall again ?
 For now the priests, whose curst designing arts 405
 Had rais'd the flame of Discord in their hearts,
 Flock'd round the people—" O ye sons of shame,
 " Cowards in war, and christians but in name,
 " Is't thus your weakness from your God would
 fly ?
 " Think on the martyrs and resolve to die ; 410
 " Think on the paths their holy army trod,
 " Nor for preserving life, offend your God.

" Think

" Think of the crown religion's sure to bring,
 " Nor wait for pardon from a tyrant king.
 " Fain would he lead your steady faith astray, 415
 " And warp your conscience to his dangerous way.
 " With zeal defend religion's holy laws ;
 " Death has no terrors in a christian cause."

So spake they, vengeful, and with purpose dire
 Blacken'd the king, 'till fell rebellion's fire 420
 Flam'd out afresh, and full of desperate strife
 They scorn to own the debt of forfeit life.
 Midst all these clamours Henry's virtue known
 Pierc'd thro' the skies to God's eternal throne.
 Lewis, from whom the Bourbon race begun, 425
 Saw now the roll of time completely run,
 When his son's error should be purg'd away,
 And pure religion beam her certain ray.
 Then from his breast fled all the train of fears,
 And faith establish'd dried up all his tears. 430
 Then soothing hope, and fond paternal love,
 Prov'd his sure guides to heavenly paths above.

Before all time, in pure effulgence bright,
 The God of Gods had plac'd his throne of light ;
 Heaven is beneath his feet ; power, wisdom, love,
 Compose his essence ; while the saints above, 436
 Triumphant

'Triumphant hosts, partake unfading joys,
 Which neither grief disturbs, nor time destroys.
 He speaks, the earth is chang'd, and frail mankind,
 The sport of error, and in councils blind, 440
 Events perceiv'd, but causes undescried,
 Accuse God's wisdom in their selfish pride.
 Such were the Goths of old, and barbarous Huns,
 The numerous Turks, and Afric's tawny sons.
 All nations have their mighty tyrants, all 445
 Rise in their turns, and hasten to their fall.
 Yet not for ever tyrants sway their lands,
 Oft falls the sceptre in more favour'd hands,
 And heaven's vice-regents, in their actions known,
 Dispense God's favours from a royal throne. 450

Now Lewis, sire of Bourbon's glorious race,
 In plaintive words address'd the throne of grace.
 Lord of the world ! if from these azure skies
 Thou lookst on mortals with considering eyes,
 See how rebellion's hateful treason stains 455
 The generous sons on fam'd Lutetia's plains.
 If all unmindful of a subject's awe,
 They spurn their king, nor heed the royal law,
 'Tis for thy faith their ardent bosoms feel,
 And disobedience springs from holy zeal. 460
 Behold

Behold the king, of tried illustrious worth ;
 The terror, love, example of the earth :
 With so much virtue couldst thou form his mind,
 To leave him pathless, and in errors blind ?
 Must thy most perfect work forego all bliss, 465
 And only Henry thank his God amiss ?
 Let him henceforth mistaken notions shun,
 Give France a master and the church a son.
 The ready subjects to their monarch bring,
 And to his subjects reconcile the king. 470
 So in thy praise may all our hearts unite,
 And a whole city worship God a-right.

His humble prayers th'eternal Maker heard,
 And spoke assent ; earth trembled at his word :
 The Leaguers stood amaz'd, and Henry's breast
 Glow'd with that faith which God himself imprest.
 When from her mansion, near th'eternal throne,
 Truth, dear to mortals, tho' sometimes unknown,
 Descends in veiling clouds, an ample shade,
 Conceal'd from mortal ken the lovely maid, 480
 Till by degrees, as at th' approach of day,
 The shadowy mists melt all dissolv'd away :
 Full to the sight now all the goddess shone,
 Clear as heaven's light, and chearful as the sun.
 Henry,

Henry, whose bosom from his early youth 485
 Had felt the longing of eternal truth,
 With faith avow'd, and pure religion glows,
 Which baffles man, and reason darkly knows;
 With will convinc'd reveres the holy see, 489
 Which always one, howe'er dispers'd and free;
 Beneath one chief adores in every place,
 In all her happy fairs, God's wondrous grace.
 Christ, for our sins who shed his purest blood,
 Now, for his chosen flock, the living food. 494
 To the king's self who bows with secret dread,
 Shows his true godhead in the hallow'd bread;
 The monarch, deep impress'd with holy awe,
 Adores the wonders of the sacred law.

Now sainted Lewis, at the Lord's command,
 The peaceful olive waving in his hand, 500
 Came down from heaven; a ready guide to bring
 To Paris' opening walls their convert king.
 In God's own name, by whom all monarchs reign,
 He enter'd Paris; while the Leaguer train

504. *He enter'd Paris, &c.*] The blockade and famine of Paris happened in 1590, but Henry IV. did not embrace the Popish religion till 1593, nor enter Paris till March 1594. It was, however, proper here to bring these great events nearer together, because this is a poem and not a history.

Canto X. THE HENRIADE. 237

Submissive bow'd, and ev'n the meddling priests 505
Are dumb, and all around with jocund feasts
And cries of joy the heaven's high concaves ring,
And hail at once a conqueror, father, king.
Henceforth all nations own'd his regal state,
Too soon determined, as began too late. 510
The Austrian trembled; and by Rome approv'd,
In Henry's virtues was his Rome belov'd.
Discord was exil'd from Lutetia's shore,
And Mayenne brave, a rebel now no more,
Himself his province, in subjection brings, 515
The best of subjects to the best of kings.

END OF THE HENRIADE.

1944



